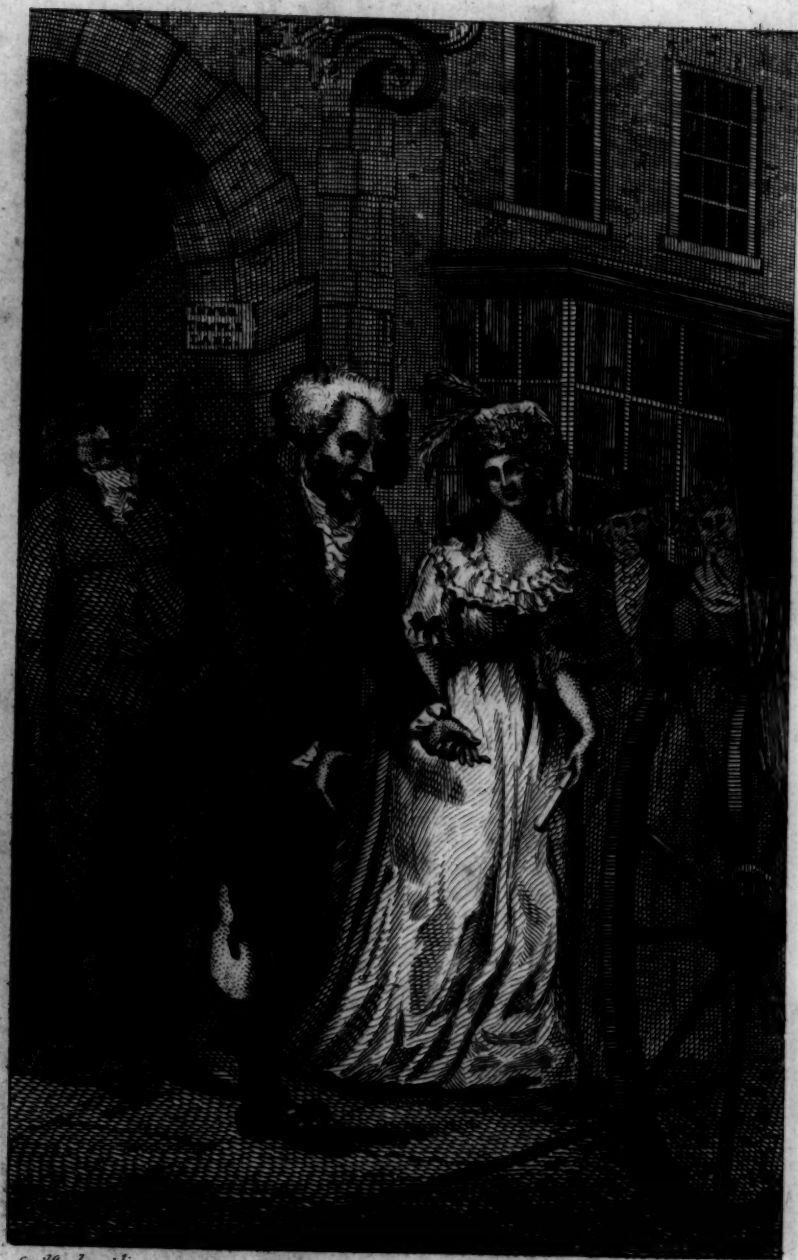


Craikhand's delin.

Barlow sculp.

DR JOHNSON'S
Politeness to Madame Boufflers.



Craifford's delin.

Barlow sculp.

DR JOHNSON'S
Politeness to Madame Boufflers.

THE
L I F E
OF
DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.
CAREFULLY
A B R I D G E D
FROM
MR. BOSWELL'S LARGE WORK.

By F. THOMAS, Esq. of the Inner Temple,

L O N D O N :

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1792.



SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

SAMUEL JOHNSON was born at Lichfield, in Staffordshire, on the 18th of September, N. S. 1709; and his initiation into the Christian church was not delayed: for his baptism is recorded, in the register of St. Mary's parish in that city, to have been performed on the day of his birth: his father is there stiled *Gentleman*, a circumstance of which an ignorant panegyrist has praised him for not being proud; when the truth is, that the appellation of *Gentleman*, though now lost in the indiscriminate assumption of *Esquire*, was commonly taken by those who could not boast of gentility. His father was Michael Johnson, a native of Derbyshire, of obscure extraction, who settled in Lichfield as a bookseller and stationer. His mother was Sarah Ford, descended of an ancient race of substantial yeomanry in Warwickshire. They were well advanced in years when they married, and never had more than two children, both sons; Samuel, their first-born, who lived to be the illustrious character whose various excellence is now universally acknowledged; and Nathanael, who died in his twenty-fifth year.

In following so very eminent a man from his cradle to his grave, every minute particular, which can throw light on the progress of his mind, is interesting.

One day, when the servant who used to be sent to school to conduct him home, had not come in time,
B he

he set out by himself, though he was then so near-sighted, that he was obliged to stoop down on his hands and knees to take a view of the kennel before he ventured to step over it. His schoolmistress, afraid that he might miss his way, or fall into the kennel, or be run over by a cart, followed him at some distance. He happened to turn about and perceive her. Feeling her careful attention as an insult to his manliness, he ran back to her in a rage, and beat her, as well as his strength would permit.

Of the powers of his memory, for which he was all his life eminent to a degree almost incredible, the following early instance was told Mr. Boswell, in his presence at Lichfield, in 1776, by his step-daughter, Mrs. Lucy Porter, as related to her by his mother. When he was a child in petticoats, and had learnt to read, Mrs. Johnson one morning put the common prayer-book into his hands, pointed to the collect for the day, and said, "Sam, you must get this by heart." She went up stairs, leaving him to study it: but by the time she had reached the second floor, she heard him following her. "What's the matter?" said she. "I can say it," he replied; and repeated it distinctly, though he could not have read it over more than twice.

Young Johnson had the misfortune to be much afflicted with the scrophula, or king's evil, which disfigured a countenance naturally well formed, and hurt his visual nerves so much, that he did not see at all with one of his eyes, though its appearance was little different from that of the other. There is amongst his prayers, one inscribed "*When my EYE was restored to its use,*" which ascertains a defect that many of his friends knew he had.

He was first taught to read English by Dame Oliver, a widow, who kept a school for young children in Lichfield. He told Mr. B. she could read the
black

black letter, and asked him to borrow for her, from his father, a bible in that character. When he was going to Oxford, she came to take leave of him, brought him, in the simplicity of her kindness, a present of gingerbread, and said he was the best scholar she had ever had. He delighted in mentioning this early compliment; adding, with a smile, that "this was as high a proof of his merit as he could conceive." His next instructor in English was a master, whom, he familiarly called Tom Brown, who, said he, "published a spelling-book, and dedicated it to the UNIVERSE;—but, I fear, no copy of it can now be had."

He began to learn Latin with Mr. Hawkins, usher, or under-master of Lichfield school, "a man (said he) very skilful in his little way." With him he continued two years, and then rose to be under the care of Mr. Hunter the head-master, who, according to his account, "was very severe, and wrong-headedly severe. He used (said he) to beat us unmercifully; and he did not distinguish between ignorance and negligence; for he would beat a boy equally for not knowing a thing, as for neglecting to know it."

Johnson did not strut or stand on tiptoe: he only did not stoop. From his earliest years, his superiority was perceived and acknowledged. He was from the beginning *ἄραξ ἀνδρῶν*, a king of men. His schoolfellow, Mr. Hector, never knew him corrected at school, but for talking and diverting other boys from their business. He seemed to learn by intuition; for though indolence and procrastination were inherent in his constitution, whenever he made an exertion, he did more than any one else. In short, he is a memorable instance of what has been often observed, that the boy is the man in miniature; and that the distinguishing characteristics of each

individual are the same, through the whole course of life.

He discovered a great ambition to excel, which roused him to counteract his indolence. He was uncommonly inquisitive; and his memory was so tenacious, that he never forgot any thing that he either heard or read. Mr. Hector remembers having recited to him eighteen verses, which, after a little pause, he repeated *verbatim*, varying only one epithet, by which he improved the line.

He never joined with the other boys in their ordinary diversions; his only amusement was in winter, when he took a pleasure in being drawn upon the ice by a boy barefooted, who pulled him along by a garter fixed round him; no very easy operation, as his size was remarkably large.

When a boy, he was immoderately fond of reading romances of chivalry, and he retained his fondness for them through life.

Johnson was, at the age of fifteen, removed to the school of Stourbridge, in Worcestershire, of which Mr. Wentworth was then master. This step was taken by the advice of his cousin, the Reverend Mr. Ford. At this school he did not receive so much benefit as was expected. It has been said, that he acted in the capacity of an assistant to Mr. Wentworth, in teaching the younger boys.

He thus discriminated, to Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, his progress at his two grammar-schools. "At one, I learnt much in the school, but little from the master; in the other, I learnt much from the master, but little in the school."

He did not remain at Stourbridge much more than a year, and then returned home, where he may be said to have loitered, for two years, in a state very unworthy his uncommon abilities. He had already given several proofs of his poetical genius, both in
his

his school-exercifes and in other occasional compositions.

He paffed the two years which he fpent at home, after his return from Stourbridge, in what he thought idleneſs, and was ſcolderd by his father for his want of ſteady application. He had no ſettled plan of life, nor looked forward at all, but merely lived from day to day. Yet he read a great deal in a deſultory manner, without any ſcheme of ſtudy, as chance threw books in his way, and inclination directed him through them. He uſed to mention one curious inſtance of his caſual reading, when but a boy. Having imagined that his brother had hid ſome apples behind a large folio upon an upper ſhelf in his father's ſhop, he climbed up to ſearch for them. There were no apples; but the large folio proved to be Petrarch, whom he had ſeen mentioned, in ſome preface, as one of the reſtorers of learning. His curioſity having been thus excited, he ſat down with avidity, and read a great part of the book. What he read during theſe two years, he told Mr. B. was not works of mere amuſement, "not voyages and travels, but all literature, Sir, all ancient writers, all manly; though but little Greek, only ſome of Anacreon and Heſiod; but in this irregular manner (added he) I had looked into a great many books, which were not commonly known at the Univerſities, where they ſeldom read any books but what are put into their hands by their tutors; ſo that when I came to Oxford, Dr. Adams, maſter of Pembroke College, told me, I was the beſt qualified for the Univerſity that he had ever known come there."

That a man in Mr. Michael Johnson's circumſtances ſhould think of ſending his ſon to the expenſive Univerſity of Oxford, at his own charge, ſeems very improbable. The ſcheme, indeed, would never have taken place, had not a gentleman of Shropſhire,

shire, one of his schoolfellows, spontaneously undertaken to support him at Oxford, in the character of his companion; though, in fact, he never received any assistance whatever from that gentleman. He, however, went to Oxford, and was entered a Commoner of Pembroke College, on the 31st of October, 1728, being then in his nineteenth year.

On the night of Johnson's arrival at Oxford, his father, who had anxiously accompanied him, found means to have him introduced to Mr. Jorden, who was to be his tutor.

His father seemed very full of the merits of his son, and told the company he was a good scholar, and a poet, and wrote Latin verses. His figure and manner appeared strange to them; but he behaved modestly, and sat silent, till upon something which occurred in the course of conversation, he suddenly struck in and quoted Macrobius; and thus he gave the first impression of that more extensive reading in which he had indulged himself.

The fifth of November was at that time kept with great solemnity at Pembroke College, and exercises upon the subject of the day were required. Johnson neglected to perform his, which is much to be regretted; for his vivacity of imagination, and force of language, would probably have produced something sublime upon the gunpowder plot. To apologise for his neglect, he gave in a short copy of verses, entitled *Somnium*, containing a common thought; "that the Muse had come to him in his sleep, and whispered that it did not become him to write on such subjects as politics; he should confine himself to humble themes:" but the versification was truly Virgilian.

The "morbid melancholy" which was lurking into his constitution, and to which we may ascribe those particularities, and that aversion to regular life, which, at a very early period, marked his character, gathered

gathered such strength in his twentieth year, as to afflict him in a dreadful manner. While he was at Lichfield, in the College vacation of the year 1729, he felt himself overwhelmed with an horrible hypochondria, with perpetual irritation, fretfulness, and impatience; and with a dejection, gloom, and despair, which made existence misery. From this dismal malady he never afterwards was perfectly relieved; and all his labours, and all his enjoyments, were but temporary interruptions of its baleful influence.

But, amidst the oppression and distraction of a disease which very few have felt in its full extent, but many have experienced in a slighter degree, Johnson, in his writings, and in his conversation, never failed to display all the varieties of intellectual excellence. In his march through this world to a better, his mind still appeared grand and brilliant, and impressed all around him with the truth of Virgil's noble sentiment—" *Ignescit ollis vigor et caelestis origo.*"

He communicated to Mr. B. the following particulars upon the subject of his religious progress. "I fell into an inattention to religion, or an indifference about it, in my ninth year. The church at Lichfield, in which we had a seat, wanted reparation, so I was to go and find a seat in other churches; and having bad eyes, and being awkward about this, I used to go and read in the fields on Sunday. This habit continued till my fourteenth year; and still I find a great reluctance to go to church. I then became a sort of *lax talker* against religion, for I did not much *think* against it; and this lasted till I went to Oxford, where it would not be *suffered*. When at Oxford, I took up 'Law's Serious Call to the Unconverted,' expecting to find it a dull book, (as such books generally are,) and perhaps to laugh

laugh at it. But I found Law quite an overmatch for me; and this was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest of religion, after I became capable of rational inquiry." From this time forward, religion was the predominant object of his thoughts; though, with the just sentiments of a conscientious christian, he lamented that his practice of its duties fell far short of what it ought to be.

No man had a more ardent love of literature, or a higher respect for it, than Johnson. His apartment in Pembroke College was that upon the second floor, over the gateway. The enthusiasts of learning will ever contemplate it with veneration. One day, while he was sitting in it quite alone, Dr. Panting, then master of the College, whom he called "a fine Jacobite fellow," overheard him uttering this soliloquy in his strong emphatic voice: "Well, I have a mind to see what is done in other places of learning. I'll go and visit the Universities abroad. I'll go to France and Italy. I'll go to Padua.—And I'll mind my business. For an *Athenian* blockhead is the worst of all blockheads."

From the information of Dr. Taylor, Mr. B. gives a very strong instance of that rigid honesty which Mr. Johnson ever inflexibly preserved. Taylor had obtained his father's consent to be entered at Pembroke, that he might be with his schoolfellow Johnson, with whom, though some years older than himself, he was very intimate. This would have been a great comfort to Johnson. But he fairly told Taylor that he could not, in conscience, suffer him to enter where he knew he could not have an able tutor. He then made inquiry all round the University, and having found that Mr. Bateman, of Christ-Church, was the tutor of highest reputation, Taylor was entered of that College. Mr. Bateman's lectures were so excellent, that Johnson used to come and get them at second-hand from Taylor, till his poverty

poverty being so extreme, that his shoes were worn out, and his feet appeared through them, he saw that this humiliating circumstance was perceived by the Christ-church men, and he came no more. He was too proud to accept of money, and somebody having set a new pair of shoes at his door, he threw them away with indignation. How must we feel when we read such an anecdote of Samuel Johnson!

The *res angusta domi* prevented him from having the advantage of a complete academical education. The friend to whom he had trusted for support had deceived him. His debts in College, though not great, were increasing; and his scanty remittances from Lichfield, which had all along been made with great difficulty, could be supplied no longer, his father having fallen into a state of insolvency. Compelled, therefore, by irresistible necessity, he left the College in autumn, 1731, without a degree, having been a member of it little more than three years.

And now Johnson returned to his native city, destitute, and not knowing how he should gain even a decent livelihood. His father's misfortunes in trade rendered him unable to support his son; and for some time there appeared no means by which he could maintain himself. In the December of this year his father died.

The state of poverty in which he died, appears from a note in one of Johnson's little diaries of the following year, which strongly displays his spirit and virtuous dignity of mind. "1732, Julii 15. Undecim aureas deposui, quo die quicquid ante matris funus (quod serum sit precor) de paternis bonis sperari licet, viginti scilicet libras accepi. Usque adeo mihi fortuna fingenda est. Interea, ne paupertate vires animi languescant, nec in flagitia egestas abigat, cavendum.—I layed by eleven guineas on this day, when I received twenty pounds, being all that I have reason to hope for out of my father's effects, previous to the

death of my mother ; an event which I pray God may be very remote. I now, therefore, see that I must make my own fortune. Meanwhile, let me take care that the powers of my mind may not be debilitated by poverty, and that indigence do not force me into any criminal act."

Johnson was so far fortunate, that the respectable character of his parents, and his own merit, had, from his earliest years, secured him a kind reception in the best families at Lichfield.

In the forlorn state of his circumstances he accepted of an offer to be employed as usher in the school of Market-Bosworth, in Leicestershire, to which it appears, from one of his little fragments of a diary, that he went on foot, on the 16th of July,—"*Julii 16. Bosworthiam pedes petii.*"

This employment was very irksome to him in every respect, and he complained grievously of it in his letters to his friend Mr. Hector, who was now settled as a surgeon at Birmingham ; and, after suffering for a few months such complicated misery, he relinquished a situation which all his life afterwards he recollected with the strongest aversion, and even a degree of horror. But it is probable that at this period, whatever uneasiness he may have endured, he laid the foundation of much future eminence by application to his studies.

Being now again totally unoccupied, he was invited by Mr. Hector to pass some time with him at Birmingham, as his guest, at the house of Mr. Warren, with whom Mr. Hector lodged and boarded. Mr. Warren was the first established bookseller in Birmingham, and was very attentive to Johnson, who he soon found could be of much service to him in his trade, by his knowledge of literature ; and he even obtained the assistance of his pen in furnishing some numbers of a periodical Essay printed in the newspaper, of which Warren was proprietor.

He

He continued to live as Mr. Hector's guest for about six months, and then hired lodgings in another part of the town, finding himself as well situated at Birmingham as he supposed he could be any where, while he had no settled plan of life, and very scanty means of subsistence. He made some valuable acquaintances there, amongst whom were Mr. Porter, a mercer, whose widow he afterwards married, and Mr. Taylor, who by his ingenuity in mechanical inventions, and his success in trade, acquired an immense fortune. But the comfort of being near Mr. Hector, his old schoolfellow and intimate friend, was Johnson's chief inducement to continue here.

Having mentioned that he had read at Pembroke College a Voyage to Abyssinia, by Lobo, a Portuguese jesuit, and that he thought an abridgement and translation of it from the French into English might be an useful and profitable publication, Mr. Warren and Mr. Hector joined in urging him to undertake it. He accordingly agreed; and the book not being to be found in Birmingham, he borrowed it of Pembroke College.

The book was completed, and was published in 1735, with LONDON upon the title page, though it was in reality printed at Birmingham, a device too common with provincial publishers. For this work he had from Mr. Warren only the sum of five guineas!

Johnson returned to Lichfield early in 1734, and in August that year he made an attempt to procure some little subsistence by his pen; for he published proposals for printing by subscription the Latin poems of Politian.

It appears that his brother Nathanael had taken up his father's trade; for it is mentioned, that "subscriptions are taken in by the editor, or N. Johnson, bookseller, of Lichfield." Notwithstanding the merit of Johnson, and the cheap price at which this

translation, with its accompaniments, was offered, there were not subscribers enough to insure a sufficient sale; so the work never appeared, and, probably, never was executed.

Johnson had, from his early youth, been sensible to the influence of female charms. When at Stourbridge school, he was much enamoured of Olivia Lloyd, a young quaker, to whom he wrote a copy of verses; and he afterwards conceived a tender passion for Miss Lucy Porter, daughter of the lady whom he afterwards married.

His juvenile attachments to the fair sex were, however, very transient; and it is certain, that he formed no criminal connection whatsoever. In his younger days his conduct was strictly virtuous in that respect; and though he loved to exhilarate himself with wine, he was never intoxicated but once.

When he was first introduced to Mrs. Porter, his appearance was very forbidding: he was then lean and lank, so that his immense structure of bones was hideously striking to the eye, and the scars of the scrophula were deeply visible. He also wore his hair, which was straight and stiff, and separated behind; and he often had, seemingly, convulsive starts and odd gesticulations, which tended to excite at once surprise and ridicule. Mrs. Porter was so much engaged by his conversation, that she overlooked all these external disadvantages, and said to her daughter, "This is the most sensible man that I ever saw in my life."

Though Mrs. Porter was double the age of Johnson, and her person and manner were by no means pleasing to others, she must have had a superiority of understanding and talents, as she certainly inspired him with a more than ordinary passion; and she having signified her willingness to accept of his hand, he went to Lichfield to ask his mother's consent of the marriage, which he could not but be conscious

scious was a very imprudent scheme, both on account of their disparity of years, and her want of fortune. But Mrs. Johnson knew too well the ardour of her son's temper, and was too tender a parent, to oppose his inclinations.

The following curious account of their journey to church upon the nuptial morn, was given to Mr. B. by the doctor himself. "Sir, she had read the old romances, and had got into her head the fantastical notion that a woman of spirit should use her lover like a dog. So, Sir, at first she told me that I rode too fast, and she could not keep up with me; and, when I rode a little slower, she passed me, and complained that I lagged behind. I was not to be made the slave of caprice; and I resolved to begin as I meant to end. I therefore pushed on briskly, till I was fairly out of her sight. The road lay between two hedges, so I was sure she could not miss it; and I contrived that she should soon come up with me. When she did, I observed her to be in tears."

He now set up a private academy, for which purpose he hired a large house, well situated near his native city. In the Gentleman's Magazine for 1736, there is the following advertisement: "At Edial, near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages, by SAMUEL JOHNSON." But the only pupils that were put under his care were the celebrated David Garrick and his brother George, and a Mr. Offely, a young gentleman of good fortune, who died early.

Johnson was not more satisfied with his situation as the master of an academy, than with that of the usher of a school; we need not wonder, therefore, that he did not keep his academy above a year and a half. From Mr. Garrick's account he did not appear to have been profoundly revered by his pupils. His oddities of manner, and uncouth gesticulations,

could not but be the subject of merriment to them ; and, in particular, the young rogues used to listen at the door of his bedchamber, and peep through the key-hole, that they might turn into ridicule his tumultuous and aukward fondness for Mrs. Johnson, whom he used to name by the familiar appellation of *Tetty* or *Tetsy*, which, like *Betty* or *Betsy*, is provincially used as a contraction for Elizabeth, her christian name, but which to us seems ludicrous, when applied to a woman of her age and appearance. Mr. Garrick has described her as very fat, with a bosom of more than ordinary protuberance, with swelled cheeks, of a florid red, produced by thick painting, and increased by the liberal use of cordials ; flaring and fantastic in her dress, and affected both in her speech and her general behaviour.

While Johnson kept his academy, he wrote a great part of his tragedy of *IRENE*. When he had finished some part of it, he read what he had done to Mr. Walmisley, who objected to his having already brought his heroine into great distress, and asked him “ how can you possibly contrive to plunge her into deeper calamity ? ” Johnson, in sly allusion to the supposed oppressive proceedings of the court of which Mr. Walmisley was register, replied, “ Sir, I can put her into the Spiritual Court ! ”

Johnson now thought of trying his fortune in London, the great field of genius and exertion, where talents of every kind have the fullest scope, and the highest encouragement. It is a memorable circumstance, that his pupil David Garrick went thither at the same time, with intention to complete his education, and follow the profession of the law, from which he was soon diverted by his decided preference for the stage.

How he employed himself upon his first coming to London is not particularly known. Mr. Walmisley gave him a letter of introduction to Lintot his bookseller ;

seller; but Mr. Cave was the first publisher by whom his pen was engaged in London.

He had a little money when he came to town, and he knew how he could live in the cheapest manner. His first lodgings were at the house of Mr. Norris, a staymaker, in Exeter-street, adjoining to Catharine-street, in the Strand. "I dined (said he) very well for eight-pence, with very good company, at the Pine Apple in New-street, just by. Several of them had travelled. They expected to meet every day; but did not know one another's names. It used to cost the rest a shilling, for they drank wine; but I had a cut of meat for six-pence, and bread for a penny, and gave the waiter a penny; so that I was quite well served, nay, better than the rest, for they gave the waiter nothing."

Amidst this cold obscurity, there was one brilliant circumstance to cheer him; he was well acquainted with Mr. Henry Hervey, one of the branches of the noble family of that name, who had been quartered at Lichfield as an officer of the army, and had at this time a house in London, where Johnson was frequently entertained, and had an opportunity of meeting genteel company.

In the course of the summer he returned to Lichfield, where he had left Mrs. Johnson, and there he at last finished his tragedy, which was not executed with his rapidity of composition upon other occasions, but was slowly and painfully elaborated.

Johnson's residence at Lichfield, on his return to it at this time, was only for three months; and as he had as yet seen but a small part of the wonders of the metropolis, he had little to tell his townsmen.

He now removed to London with Mrs. Johnson; but her daughter, who had lived with them at Edial, was left with her relations in the country. His lodgings were for some time in Woodstock-street,
near

near Hanover-square, and afterwards in Castle-street, near Cavendish-square.

His tragedy being by this time, as he thought, completely finished and fit for the stage, he was very desirous that it should be brought forward. Mr. Peter Garrick and Johnson went together to the Fountain tavern, and read it over, and he afterwards solicited Mr. Fleetwood, the patentee of Drury-lane theatre, to have it acted at his house; but Mr. Fleetwood would not accept it, probably because it was not patronised by some man of high rank; and it was not acted till 1749, when his friend David Garrick was manager of that theatre.

His first performance in the Gentleman's Magazine, which for many years was his principal resource for employment and support, was a copy of Latin verses, in March, 1738, addressed to the editor in so happy a style of compliment, that Cave must have been destitute both of taste and sensibility, had he not felt himself highly gratified.

It appears that he was now enlisted by Mr. Cave as a regular coadjutor in his magazine, by which he probably obtained a tolerable livelihood. At what time, or by what means, he had acquired a competent knowledge both of French and Italian, is not known; but he was so well skilled in them, as to be sufficiently qualified for a translator. That part of his labour which consisted in emendation and improvement of the production of other contributors, like that employed in levelling ground, can be perceived only by those who had an opportunity of comparing the original with the altered copy. What we certainly know to have been done by him in this way, was the Debates in both houses of Parliament, under the name of "The Senate of Lilliput," sometimes with feigned denominations of the several speakers, sometimes with denominations formed of the letters

letters of their real names, in the manner of what is called anagram, so that they might easily be decyphered. Parliament then kept the press in a kind of mysterious awe, which made it necessary to have recourse to such devices.

Thus was Johnson employed, during some of the best years of his life, as a mere literary labourer "for gain, not glory," solely to obtain an honest support. He however indulged himself in occasional little sallies, which the French so happily express by the term *jeux d'esprit*, and which will be noticed in their order, in the progress of these memoirs.

But what first displayed his transcendent powers, and "gave the world assurance of the MAN," was his "LONDON, a Poem, in Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal," which came out in May this year, and burst forth with a splendour, the rays of which will for ever encircle his name.

It has been generally said, that Johnson offered his "LONDON" to several booksellers, none of whom would purchase it. To this circumstance Mr. Derrick alludes in the following lines of his "FORTUNE, A RHAPSODY:"

"Will no kind patron JOHNSON own?
Shall JOHNSON friendless range the town?
And every publisher refuse
The offspring of his happy Muse?"

The worthy, modest, and ingenious Mr. Robert Doddsley, however, had taste enough to perceive its uncommon merit, and thought it creditable to have a share in it. The fact is, that, at a conference, he bargained for the whole property of it, for which he gave Johnson ten guineas, who observed on the occasion to one of his friends, "I might, perhaps, have accepted of less; but that Paul Whitehead had a little before got ten guineas for a poem; and I would not take less than Paul Whitehead."

Johnson's

Johnson's "London" was published in May, 1738; and it is remarkable, that it came out on the same morning with Pope's satire, entitled "1738;" so that England had at once its Juvenal and Horace as poetical monitors.

Every body was delighted with it; and there being no name to it, the first buz of the literary circles was "here is an unknown poet, greater even than Pope." And it is recorded, that it "got to the second edition in the course of a week."

Pope, who then filled the poetical throne without a rival, it may reasonably be presumed, must have been particularly struck by the sudden appearance of such a poet; and, to his credit, let it be remembered, that his feelings and conduct on the occasion were candid and liberal. He requested Mr. Richardson, son of the painter, to endeavour to find out who this new author was. Mr. Richardson, after some inquiry, having informed him that he had discovered only that his name was Johnson, and that he was some obscure man, Pope said, "He will soon be *deterré*."

Johnson used to be a pretty frequent visitor at the house of Mr. Richardson, author of *Clarissa*, and other novels of extensive reputation. Mr. Hogarth came one day to see Richardson, soon after the execution of Dr. Cameron, for having taken arms for the house of Stuart in 1745-6; and being a warm partisan of George the Second, he observed to Richardson, that certainly there must have been some very unfavourable circumstances lately discovered in this particular case, which had induced the King to approve of an execution for rebellion so long after the time when it was committed, as this had the appearance of putting a man to death in cold blood, and was very unlike his Majesty's usual clemency. While he was talking, he perceived a person standing at a window

window in the room, shaking his head, and rolling himself about in a strange ridiculous manner. He concluded that he was an idiot, whom his relations had put under the care of Mr. Richardson, as a very good man. To his great surprise, however, this figure stalked forwards to where he and Mr. Richardson were sitting, and all at once took up the argument, and burst out into an invective against George the Second, as one, who, upon all occasions, was unrelenting and barbarous; mentioning many instances, particularly, that when an officer of high rank had been acquitted by a Court Martial, George the Second had, with his own hand, struck his name off the list. In short, he displayed such a power of eloquence, that Hogarth looked at him with astonishment, and actually imagined that this idiot had been at the moment inspired. Neither Hogarth nor Johnson were made known to each other at this interview.

In 1741 his tragedy of *IRENE* had been for some time ready for the stage, and his necessities made him desirous of getting as much as he could for it, without delay; but he could on no reasonable terms dispose of it.

The following exquisitely beautiful Ode has not been inserted in any of the collections of Johnson's poetry, written by him at a very early period.

FRIENDSHIP, AN ODE.

FRIENDSHIP, peculiar boon of heaven,
The noble mind's delight and pride,
To men and angels only given,
To all the lower world deny'd.

While love, unknown among the blest,
Parent of thousand wild desires,
The savage and the human breast
Torments alike with raging fires.

With

With bright, but oft destructive, gleam,
 Alike o'er all his lightnings fly;
 Thy lambent glories only beam
 Around the fav'rites of the sky.

Thy gentle flows of guiltless joys
 On fools and villains ne'er descend;
 In vain for thee the tyrant sighs,
 And hugs a flatterer for a friend.

Directress of the brave and just,
 O guide us through life's darksome way!
 And let the tortures of mistrust
 On selfish bosoms only prey.

Nor shall thine ardours cease to glow,
 When souls to blissful climes remove:
 What rais'd our virtue here below,
 Shall aid our happiness above.

His circumstances were at this time [1743] much embarrassed; yet his affection for his mother was so warm, and so liberal, that he took upon himself a debt of hers, which, though small in itself, was then considerable to him. This appears from the following letter which he wrote to Mr. Levett, of Lichfield, the original of which is in the possession of Mr. B.

To Mr. LEVETT, in Lichfield.

"SIR,

December 1, 1743.

"I am extremely sorry that we have encroached so much upon your forbearance with respect to the interest, which a great perplexity of affairs hindered me from thinking of with that attention that I ought, and which I am not immediately able to remit to you, but will pay it (I think twelve pounds,) in two months. I look upon this, and on the future interest of that mortgage, as my own debt; and beg that you will be pleased to give me directions how to pay it, and not mention it to my dear mother. If it be necessary to pay this in less time, I believe I can do it; but I take two months for certainty, and beg an
 answer

answer whether you can allow me so much time. I think myself very much obliged to your forbearance, and shall esteem it a great happiness to be able to serve you. I have great opportunities of dispersing any thing that you may think it proper to make public. I will give a note for the money, payable at the time mentioned, to any one here that you shall appoint. I am, Sir,

Your most obedient

And most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON,

At Mr. Osborne's, bookseller, in Gray's Inn."

His life of Baretier was now re-published in a pamphlet by itself. But he produced one work this year, fully sufficient to maintain the high reputation which he had acquired. This was "THE LIFE OF RICHARD SAVAGE;" a man, of whom it is difficult to speak impartially, without wondering that he was for some time the intimate companion of Johnson; for his character was marked by profligacy, insolence, and ingratitude: yet, as he undoubtedly had a warm and vigorous, though unregulated mind, had seen life in all its varieties, and been much in the company of the statesmen and wits of his time, he could communicate to Johnson an abundant supply of such materials as his philosophical curiosity most eagerly desired; and as Savage's misfortunes and misconduct had reduced him to the lowest state of wretchedness as a writer for bread, his visits to St. John's Gate naturally brought Johnson and him together.

It is melancholy to reflect, that Johnson and Savage were sometimes in such extreme indigence, that they could not pay for a lodging; so that they have wandered together whole nights in the streets. Yet in these almost incredible scenes of distress, we

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may

may suppose that Savage mentioned many of the anecdotes with which Johnson afterwards enriched the life of his unhappy companion, and those of other poets.

He mentioned to Sir Joshua Reynolds, that one night in particular, when Savage and he walked round St. James's-square for want of a lodging, they were not at all depressed by their situation, but in high spirits and brimful of patriotism, traversed the square for several hours, inveighed against the minister, and "resolved they would *stand by their country*."

In February, 1744, the celebrated "Life of Savage" was published. In this work, although it must be allowed that its moral is the reverse of— "*Respicere exemplar vitæ morumque jubebo*," a very useful lesson is inculcated, to guard men of warm passions from a too free indulgence of them; and the various incidents are related in so clear and animated a manner, and illuminated throughout with so much philosophy, that it is one of the most interesting narratives in the English language.

He exhibits the genius of Savage to the best advantage, in the specimens of his poetry which he has selected, some of which are of uncommon merit.

It is remarkable, that in this biographical disquisition there appears a very strong symptom of Johnson's prejudice against players; a prejudice, which may be attributed to the following causes: first, the imperfection of his organs, which were so defective that he was not susceptible of the fine impressions which theatrical excellence produces upon the generality of mankind; secondly, the cold rejection of his tragedy; and, lastly, the brilliant success of Garrick, who had been his pupil, who had come to London at the same time with him, not in a much more prosperous state than himself, and whose talents
he

he undoubtedly rated low, compared with his own. His being outstripped by his pupil in the race of immediate fame, as well as of fortune, probably made him feel some indignation, as thinking that whatever might be Garrick's merits in his art, the reward was too great when compared with what the most successful efforts of literary labour could attain. At all periods of his life, Johnson used to talk contemptuously of players; but in this work he speaks of them with peculiar acrimony; for which, perhaps, there was formerly too much reason, from the licentious and dissolute manners of those engaged in that profession.

His schoolfellow and friend, Dr. Taylor, told Mr. B. a pleasant anecdote of Johnson's triumphing over his pupil David Garrick. When that great actor had played some little time at Goodman's-fields, Johnson and Taylor went to see him perform, and afterwards passed the evening at a tavern with him and old Giffard. Johnson, who was ever depreciating stage-players, after censuring some mistakes in emphasis which Garrick had committed in the course of that night's acting, said, "The players, Sir, have got a kind of rant, with which they run on, without any regard either to accent or emphasis." Both Garrick and Giffard were offended at this sarcasm, and endeavoured to refute it; upon which Johnson rejoined, "Well now, I'll give you something to speak, with which you are little acquainted, and then we shall see how just my observation is. That shall be the criterion. Let me hear you repeat the ninth Commandment, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.'" Both tried at it, said Dr. Taylor, and both mistook the emphasis, which should be upon *not* and *false witness*. Johnson put them right, and enjoyed his victory with great glee.

In 1745 he published a pamphlet entitled "Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth, with Remarks on Sir T. H.'s (Sir Thomas Hammer's Edition of Shakspeare." To which he affixed, proposals for a new edition of that poet.

As we do not trace any thing else published by him during the course of this year, we may conjecture that he was occupied entirely with that work. But the little encouragement which was given by the public to his anonymous proposals for the execution of a task which Warburton was known to have undertaken, probably damped his ardour. His pamphlet, however, was highly esteemed, and was fortunate enough to obtain the approbation even of the supercilious Warburton himself.

In 1746 it is probable that he was still employed upon his Shakspeare, which perhaps he laid aside for a time, upon account of the high expectations which were formed of Warburton's edition of that great poet. It is somewhat curious, that his literary career appears to have been almost totally suspended in the years 1745 and 1746, those years which were marked by a civil war in Great-Britain, when a rash attempt was made to restore the House of Stuart to the throne. That he had a tenderness for that unfortunate House, is well known; and some may fancifully imagine, that a sympathetic anxiety impeded the exertion of his intellectual powers: but Mr. B. is inclined to think, that he was, during this time, sketching the outlines of his great philosophical work.

In 1747 his old pupil and friend, David Garrick, having become joint patentee and manager of Drury-lane theatre, Johnson honoured his opening of it with a Prologue, which for just and manly dramatic criticism, on the whole range of the English stage,

as well as for poetical excellence, is unrivalled. This year is distinguished as the epoch when Johnson's arduous work, his *DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE*, was announced.

How long this immense undertaking had been the object of his contemplation, is not known. Mr. B. once asked him by what means he had attained to that astonishing knowledge of our language, by which he was enabled to realise a design of such extent, and accumulated difficulty. He said, that "it was not the effect of particular study; but that it had grown up in his mind insensibly." Mr. B. has been informed by Mr. James Doddsley, that several years before this period, when Johnson was one day sitting in his brother Robert's shop, he heard his brother suggest to him, that a Dictionary of the English Language would be a work that would be well received by the public; that Johnson seemed at first to catch at the proposition, but, after a pause, said, in his abrupt decisive manner, "I believe I shall not undertake it." That he, however, had bestowed much thought upon the subject, before he published his "Plan," is evident from the enlarged, clear and accurate views which it exhibits; and we find him mentioning in that tract, that many of the writers whose testimonies were to be produced as authorities, were selected by Pope, which proves that he had been furnished, probably by Mr. Robert Doddsley, with whatever hints that eminent poet had contributed towards a great literary project, that had been the subject of important consideration in a former reign.

The booksellers who contracted with Johnson, single and unaided, for the execution of a work, which in other countries has not been effected but by the co-operating exertions of many, were Mr. Robert Doddsley, Mr. Charles Hitch, Mr. Andrew Millar,

Millar, the two Messieurs Longman, and the two Messieurs Knapton. The price stipulated was fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds.

The "Plan" was addressed to Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, then one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, a nobleman who was very ambitious of literary distinction, and who, upon being informed of the design, had expressed himself in terms very favourable to its success.

There is, perhaps, in every thing of any consequence, a secret history which it would be amusing to know, could we have it authentically communicated. Johnson told Mr. B. "Sir, the way in which the Plan of my Dictionary came to be inscribed to Lord Chesterfield, was this: I had neglected to write it by the time appointed. Doddsley suggested a desire to have it addressed to Lord Chesterfield. I laid hold of this as a pretext for delay, that it might be better done, and let Doddsley have his desire. I said to my friend Dr. Bathurst, 'Now if any good comes of my addressing to Lord Chesterfield, it will be ascribed to deep policy, when, in fact, it was only a casual excuse for laziness.'"

Dr. Adams found him one day busy at his Dictionary, when the following dialogue ensued. "ADAMS. This is a great work, Sir. How are you to get all the etymologies?" JOHNSON. Why, Sir, here is a shelf with Junius, and Skinner, and others; and there is a Welch gentleman who has published a collection of Welch proverbs, who will help me with the Welch. ADAMS. But, Sir, how can you do this in three years? JOHNSON. Sir, I have no doubt that I can do it in three years. ADAMS. But the French Academy, which consists of forty members, took forty years to compile their Dictionary. JOHNSON. Sir, thus it is. This is the proportion. Let me see; forty times forty is sixteen

teen hundred. As three to sixteen hundred, so is the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman." With so much ease and pleasantry could he talk of that prodigious labour which he had undertaken to execute.

For the mechanical part, he employed six amanuenses; and let it be remembered by the natives of North-Britain, to whom he is supposed to have been so hostile, that five of them were of that country.

While the Dictionary was going forward, Johnson lived part of the time in Holborn, part in Gough-square, Fleet-street; and he had an upper room fitted up like a counting-house for the purpose, in which he gave to the copyists their several tasks. The words, partly taken from other Dictionaries, and partly supplied by himself, having been first written down with spaces left between them, he delivered in writing their etymologies, definitions, and various significations. The authorities were copied from the books themselves, in which he had marked the passages with a black-lead pencil, the traces of which could easily be effaced.

The necessary expence of preparing a work of such magnitude for the press, must have been a considerable deduction from the price stipulated to be paid for the copy-right. Nothing was allowed by the book-sellers on that account; and a large portion of it having, by mistake, been written upon both sides of the paper, so as to be inconvenient for the compositor, it cost him twenty pounds to have it transcribed upon one side only.

He is now to be considered as "tugging at his oar," as engaged in a steady continued course of occupation, sufficient to employ all his time for some years, and which was the best preventive of that constitutional melancholy which was ever lurking about him, ready to trouble his quiet. But his enlarged

larged and lively mind could not be satisfied without more diversity of employment, and the pleasure of animated relaxation. He therefore not only exerted his talents in occasional composition very different from Lexicography, but formed a club in Ivy-lane, Paternoster-row, with a view to enjoy literary discussion, and amuse his evening hours. The members associated with him in this little society were his beloved friend Dr. Richard Bathurst, Mr. Hawkesworth, afterwards well known by his writings, Mr. John Hawkins, an attorney, and a few others of different professions.

Mr. Doddsley, in 1748, brought out his *PRECEPTOR*; and to this meritorious work Johnson furnished "The Preface," containing a general sketch of the book, with a short and perspicuous recommendation of each article; as also, "The Vision of Theodore the Hermit, found in his Cell," a most beautiful allegory of human life, under the figure of ascending the mountain of existence. The Bishop of Dromore heard Dr. Johnson say, that he thought this was the best thing he ever wrote.

In January, 1749, he published "*THE VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES*, being the Tenth Satire of Juvenal imitated." He, Mr. B. believes, composed it the preceding year. Mrs. Johnson, for the sake of country air, had lodgings at Hampstead, to which he resorted occasionally, and there the greatest part, if not the whole, of this Imitation was written. The fervid rapidity with which it was produced, is scarcely credible. He composed seventy lines of it in one day, without putting one of them upon paper till they were finished.

The profits of a single poem, however excellent, appear to have been very small in the last reign, compared with what a publication of the same size has since been known to yield. For his *LONDON* he had

had only ten guineas; and now, after his fame was established, he got for his "Vanity of Human Wishes" but five guineas more.

Garrick being now vested with theatrical power by being manager of Drury-lane theatre, he kindly and generously made use of it to bring out Johnson's tragedy, which had been long kept back for want of encouragement. But in this benevolent purpose he met with no small difficulty from the temper of Johnson, which could not brook that a drama which he had formed with much study, and had been obliged to keep more than the nine years of Horace, should be revised and altered at the pleasure of an actor. Yet Garrick knew well, that without some alterations it would not be fit for the stage. A violent dispute having ensued between them, Garrick applied to the Reverend Dr. Taylor to interpose. Johnson was at first very obstinate. "Sir, (said he) the fellow wants me to make Mahomet run mad, that he may have an opportunity of tossing his hands and kicking his heels." He was, however, at last, with difficulty, prevailed on to comply with Garrick's wishes, so as to allow of some changes; but still they were not enough.

Dr. Adams was present the first night of the representation of *IRENE*, and gave the following account: "Before the curtain drew up, there were catcalls whistling, which alarmed Johnson's friends. The Prologue, which was written by himself in a manly strain, soothed the audience, and the play went off tolerably till it came to the conclusion, when Mrs. Pritchard, the heroine of the piece, was to be strangled upon the stage, and was to speak two lines with the bow-string round her neck. The audience cried out '*Murder, Murder.*' She several times attempted to speak, but in vain. At last she was obliged to go off the stage alive." This passage was afterwards

afterwards struck out, and she was carried off to be put to death behind the scenes, as the play now has it.

Notwithstanding all the support of such performers as Garrick, Barry, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, and every advantage of dress and decoration, the tragedy of Irene did not please the public. Mr. Garrick's zeal carried it through for nine nights, so that the author had his three nights profits; and from a receipt signed by him, now in the hands of Mr. James Doddsley, it appears that his friend Mr. Robert Doddsley gave him one hundred pounds for the copy, with his usual reservation of the right of one edition.

When asked how he felt upon the ill success of his tragedy, he replied, "Like the Monument;" meaning that he continued firm and unmoved as that column.

On occasion of his play being brought upon the stage, Johnson had a fancy that as a dramatic author his dress should be more gay than what he ordinarily wore; he therefore appeared behind the scenes, and even in one of the side boxes, in a scarlet waistcoat, with rich gold lace. His necessary attendance while his play was in rehearsal, and during its performance, brought him acquainted with many of the performers of both sexes, which produced a more favourable opinion of their profession than he had harshly expressed in his *Life of Savage*. With some of them he kept up an acquaintance as long as he and they lived, and was ever ready to shew them acts of kindness. He for a considerable time used to frequent the *Green Room*, and seemed to take delight in dissipating his gloom, by mixing in the sprightly chit-chat of the motley circle then to be found there. Johnson at last denied himself this amusement, from considerations of rigid virtue; saying, "I'll come no more behind

behind your scenes, David; for the silk stockings and white bosoms of your actresses excite my amorous propensities."

In 1750 he came forth in the character for which he was eminently qualified, a majestic teacher of moral and religious wisdom. The vehicle which he chose was that of a periodical paper, which he knew had been, upon former occasions, employed with great success. The *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*, were the last of the kind published in England, which had stood the test of a long trial; and such an interval had now elapsed since their publication, as made him justly think that, to many of his readers, this form of instruction would, in some degree, have the advantage of novelty. A few days before the first of his *Essays* came out, there started another competitor for fame in the same form, under the title of "*The Tatler revived*," which was "born but to die." Johnson was not very happy in the choice of his title, "*The Rambler*," which certainly is not suited to a series of grave and moral discourses; which the Italians have literally, but ludicrously, translated by *Il Vagabondo*. He gave Sir Joshua Reynolds the following account of its getting this name: "What *must* be done, Sir, *will* be done. When I was to begin publishing that paper, I was at a loss how to name it. I sat down at night upon my bedside, and resolved that I would not go to sleep till I had fixed its title. The *Rambler* seemed the best that occurred, and I took it."

With what devout and conscientious sentiments this Paper was undertaken, is evidenced by the following prayer, which he composed and offered up on the occasion: "Almighty God, the giver of all good things, without whose help all labour is ineffectual, and without whose grace all wisdom is folly; grant, I beseech Thee, that in this undertaking thy
Holy

Holy Spirit may not be with-held from me, but that I may promote thy glory, and the salvation of myself and others: grant this, O LORD, for the sake of thy son JESUS CHRIST. Amen."

The first paper of the Rambler was published on Tuesday the 20th of March, 1750; and its author was enabled to continue it, without interruption, every Tuesday and Friday, till Saturday the 17th of March, 1752, on which day it closed. Notwithstanding his constitutional indolence, his depression of spirits, and his labour in carrying on his Dictionary, he answered the stated calls of the press twice a week from the stores of his mind, during all that time having received no assistance, except four billets in No. 10 by Miss Mulso, now Mrs. Chapone; No. 30, by Mrs. Catharine Talbot; No. 97, by Mr. Samuel Richardson, whom he describes in an introductory note as "An author who has enlarged the knowledge of human nature, and taught the passions to move at the command of virtue;" and Numbers 44 and 100, by Mrs. Elizabeth Carter.

Posterity will be astonished when they are told, upon the authority of Johnson himself, that many of these discourses, which we should suppose had been laboured with all the slow attention of literary leisure, were written in haste as the moment pressed, without even being read over by him before they were printed. It can be accounted for only in this way; that by reading and meditation, and a very close inspection of life, he had accumulated a great fund of miscellaneous knowledge, which, by a peculiar promptitude of mind, was ever ready at his call, and which he had constantly accustomed himself to clothe in the most apt and energetic expression. Sir Joshua Reynolds once asked him by what means he had attained his extraordinary accuracy and flow of language. He told him, that he had early laid it down as a fixed rule to do his
best

best on every occasion, and in every company; to impart whatever he knew in the most forcible language he could put it in; and that by constant practice, and never suffering any careless expressions to escape him, or attempting to deliver his thoughts without arranging them in the clearest manner, it became habitual to him.

As the Rambler was entirely the work of one man, there was, of course, such an uniformity in its texture, as very much to exclude the charm of variety; and the grave and often solemn cast of thinking, which distinguished it from other periodical papers, made it, for some time, not generally liked. So slowly did this excellent work, of which twelve editions have now issued from the press, gain upon the world at large, that even in the closing number the author says, "I have never been much a favourite of the public."

Johnson told Mr. B. with an amiable fondness, a little pleasing circumstance relative to this work. Mrs. Johnson, in whose judgment and taste he had great confidence, said to him, after a few numbers of the Rambler had come out, "I thought very well of you before; but I did not imagine you could have written any thing equal to this." Distant praise, from whatever quarter, is not so delightful as that of a wife whom a man loves and esteems. Her approbation may be said to "come home to his bosom;" and being so near, its effect is most sensible and permanent.

In 1751 we are to consider him as carrying on both his Dictionary and Rambler. But he also wrote "The Life of Cheynel," in the miscellany called "The Student;" and the Reverend Dr. Douglas having, with uncommon acuteness, clearly detected a gross forgery and imposition upon the public by William Lauder, a Scotch schoolmaster, who had,

with equal impudence and ingenuity, represented Milton as a plagiarist from certain modern Latin poets, Johnson, who had been so far imposed upon as to furnish a Preface and Postscript to his work, now dictated a letter for Lauder, addressed to Dr. Douglas, acknowledging his fraud in terms of suitable contrition.

This extraordinary attempt of Lauder was no sudden effort. He had brooded over it for many years; and to this hour it is uncertain what his principal motive was, unless it were a vain notion of his superiority, in being able, by whatever means, to deceive mankind. To effect this, he produced certain passages from Grotius, Masenius, and others, which had a faint resemblance to some parts of the "Paradise Lost." In these he interpolated some fragments of Hog's Latin translation of that poem, alledging that the mass thus fabricated was the archetype from which Milton copied. These fabrications he published from time to time in the Gentleman's Magazine; and, exulting in his fancied success, he in 1750 ventured to collect them into a pamphlet, entitled "An Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns in his Paradise Lost." To this pamphlet Johnson wrote a Preface, in full persuasion of Lauder's honesty, and a Postscript recommending, in the most persuasive terms, a subscription for the relief of a grand-daughter of Milton, of whom he thus speaks: "It is yet in the power of a great people to reward the poet whose name they boast, and from their alliance to whose genius they claim some kind of superiority to every other nation of the earth; that poet, whose works may possibly be read when every other monument of British greatness shall be obliterated; to reward him, not with pictures or with medals, which, if he sees, he sees with contempt, but with tokens of gratitude, which

which he, perhaps, may even now consider as not unworthy the regard of an immortal spirit."

Though Johnson's circumstances were at this time far from being easy, his humane and charitable disposition was constantly exerting itself. Mrs. Anna Williams, daughter of a very ingenious Welsh physician, and a woman of more than ordinary talents and literature, having come to London in hopes of being cured of a cataract in both her eyes, which afterwards ended in total blindness, was kindly received as a constant visitor at his house while Mrs. Johnson lived; and after her death, having come under his roof in order to have an operation upon her eyes performed with more comfort to her than in lodgings, she had an apartment from him during the rest of her life, at all times when he had a house.

In 1752 he was almost entirely occupied with his Dictionary. The last paper of his Rambler was published March 2, this year; after which, there was a cessation for some time of any exertion of his talents as an essayist. But, in the same year, Dr. Hawkesworth, who was his warm admirer, and a studious imitator of his style, and then lived in great intimacy with him, began a periodical paper, entitled "THE ADVENTURER," in connection with other gentlemen, one of whom was Johnson's much-loved friend, Dr. Bathurst; and, without doubt, they received many valuable hints from his conversation, most of his friends having been so assisted in the course of their works.

That there should be a suspension of his literary labours during a part of the year 1752, will not seem strange, when it is considered that soon after closing his Rambler, he suffered a loss which, there can be no doubt, affected him with the deepest distress. For on the 17th of March, O. S. his wife died.

That his love for her was of the most ardent kind, and, during the long period of fifty years, was unimpaired by the lapse of time, is evident from various passages in the series of his Prayers and Meditations, published by the Reverend Mr. Strahan, as well as from other memorials.

The dreadful shock of separation took place in the night; and he immediately dispatched a letter to his friend, the Reverend Dr. Taylor, which expressed grief in the strongest manner he had ever read; so that it is much to be regretted it has not been preserved. The letter was brought to Dr. Taylor, at his house in the Cloysters, Westminster, about three in the morning; and as it signified an earnest desire to see him, he got up, and went to Johnson as soon as he was dressed, and found him in tears and in extreme agitation. After being a little while together, Johnson requested him to join with him in prayer. He then prayed extempore, as did Dr. Taylor; and thus, by means of that piety which was ever his primary object, his troubled mind was, in some degree, soothed and composed.

The next day he wrote as follows:

To the Reverend Dr. TAYLOR.

"DEAR SIR,

"LET me have your company and instruction. Do not live away from me. My distress is great.

"Pray desire Mrs. Taylor to inform me what mourning I should buy for my mother and Miss Porter, and bring a note in writing with you.

"Remember me in your prayers, for vain is the help of man.

I am, dear Sir, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON.

March 18, 1752."

His

His sufferings upon the death of his wife were severe; we find, about a year after her decease, that he thus addressed the Supreme Being: "O LORD, who givest the grace of repentance, and hearest the prayers of the penitent, grant that by true contrition I may obtain forgiveness of all the sins committed, and of all duties neglected in my union with the wife whom thou hast taken from me; for the neglect of joint devotion, patient exhortation, and mild instruction." The kindness of his heart, notwithstanding the impetuosity of his temper, is well known to his friends.

He deposited the remains of Mrs. Johnson in the church of Bromley in Kent, to which he was probably led by the residence of his friend Hawkesworth at that place. The funeral sermon he composed for her, which was never preached, but having been given to Dr. Taylor, has been published since his death, is a performance of uncommon excellence, and full of rational and pious comfort to such as are depressed by that severe affliction which Johnson felt when he wrote it. When it is considered that it was written in such an agitation of mind, and in the short interval between her death and burial, it cannot be read without wonder.

The friends who visited him at the time of Mrs. Johnson's death were chiefly Dr. Bathurst, and Mr. Diamond, an apothecary in Cork-street, Burlington-gardens, with whom he and Mrs. Williams generally dined every Sunday. There was a talk of his going to Iceland with him, which would probably have happened had he lived. There were also Mr. Cave, Dr. Hawkesworth, Mr. Ryland, merchant on Tower-hill, Mrs. Masters the poetess, who lived with Mr. Cave, Mrs. Carter, and sometimes Mrs. Macaulay; also, Mrs. Gardiner, wife of a tallow-chandler on Snow-hill, not in the

learned way, but a worthy good woman; Mr. (now Sir Joshua) Reynolds; Mr. Millar, Mr. Doddsley, Mr. Bouquet, Mr. Payne of Paternoster-row, booksellers; Mr. Strahan the printer, the Earl of Orrery, Lord Southwell, and Mr. Garrick.

Many are, no doubt, omitted in this catalogue of his friends, and, in particular, his humble friend Mr. Robert Levet, an obscure practitioner in physic amongst the lower people, his fees being sometimes very small sums, sometimes whatever provisions his patients could afford him, but of extensive practice in that way. It appears from Johnson's diary, that their acquaintance commenced about the year 1746; and such was Johnson's predilection for him, and fanciful estimation of his moderate abilities, that Mr. B. has heard him say he should not be satisfied, though attended by all the College of Physicians, unless he had Mr. Levet with him. Mr. Levet had an apartment in his house, or his chambers, and waited upon him every morning, through the whole course of his late and tedious breakfast. He was of a strange grotesque appearance, stiff and formal in his manner, and seldom said a word while any company was present.

The circle of his friends indeed, at this time, was extensive and various, far beyond what has been generally imagined. To trace his acquaintance with each particular person, if it could be done, would be a task, of which the labour would not be repaid by the advantage. But exceptions are to be made; one of which must be a friend so eminent as Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was truly his *dulce decus*, and with whom he maintained an uninterrupted intimacy to the last hour of his life. When Johnson lived in Castle-street, Cavendish-square, he used frequently to visit two ladies, who lived opposite to him, Miss Cotterells, daughters of Admiral Cotterell.

rell. Reynolds used also to visit there, and thus they met. Mr. Reynolds had, from the first reading of his most admirable *Life of Savage*, conceived a very high admiration of Johnson's powers of writing. His conversation no less delighted him; and he cultivated his acquaintance with the laudable zeal of one who was ambitious of general improvement. Sir Joshua, indeed, was lucky enough at their very first meeting to make a remark, which was so much above the common-place style of conversation, that Johnson at once perceived that Reynolds had the habit of thinking for himself. The ladies were regretting the death of a friend, to whom they owed great obligations; upon which Reynolds observed, "You have, however, the comfort of being relieved from a burthen of gratitude." They were shocked a little at this alleviating suggestion, as too selfish; but Johnson defended it in his clear and forcible manner, and was much pleased with the *mind*, the fair view of human nature, which it exhibited, like some of the reflections of Rochefaucault. The consequence was, that he went home with Reynolds, and supped with him.

When they were one evening together at the Miss Cotterells, the then Duchess of Argyle and another lady of high rank came in. Johnson thinking that the Miss Cotterells were too much engrossed by them, and that he and his friend were neglected, as low company of whom they were somewhat ashamed, grew angry; and resolving to shock their supposed pride, by making their great visitors imagine that his friend and he were low indeed, he addressed himself in a loud tone to Mr. Reynolds, saying, "How much do you think you and I could get in a week, if we were to *work as hard as we could*?" as if they had been common mechanics.

His

His acquaintance with Bennet Langton, Esq. of Langton, in Lincolnshire, another much valued friend, commenced soon after the conclusion of his *Rambler*, which that gentleman, then a youth, had read with so much admiration, that he came to London chiefly with the view of endeavouring to be introduced to its author. By a fortunate chance he happened to take lodgings in a house where Mr. Levet frequently visited; and having mentioned his wish to his landlady, she introduced him to Mr. Levet, who readily obtained Johnson's permission to bring Mr. Langton to him; as, indeed, Johnson, during the whole course of his life, had no shyness, real or affected, but was easy of access to all who were properly recommended, and even wished to see numbers at his *levee*, as his morning circle of company might, with strict propriety, be called. Mr. Langton was exceedingly surprized when the sage first appeared. He had not received the smallest intimation of his figure, dress, or manner. From perusing his writings, he fancied he should see a decent, well-drest, in short, a remarkably decorous philosopher. Instead of which, down from his bed-chamber, about noon, came, as newly risen, a huge uncouth figure, with a little dark wig which scarcely covered his head, and his clothes hanging loose about him. But his conversation was so rich, so animated, and so forcible, and his religious and political notions so congenial with those in which Mr. Langton had been educated, that he conceived for him that veneration and attachment which he ever preserved. Johnson was not the less ready to love Mr. Langton, for his being of a very ancient family. "Langton," said he, "Sir, has a grant of a warren from Henry the Second, and Cardinal Stephen Langton, in King John's reign, was of this family."

Mr.

Mr. Langton afterwards went to pursue his studies at Trinity College, Oxford, where he formed an acquaintance with his fellow-student, Mr. Topham Beauclerk, who, though their opinions and modes of life were so different, that it seemed utterly improbable that they should at all agree, had so ardent a love of literature, so acute an understanding, such elegance of manners, and so well discerned the excellent qualities of Mr. Langton, that they became intimate friends.

Johnson, soon after this acquaintance began, passed a considerable time at Oxford. He at first thought it strange that Langton should associate so much with one who had the character of being loose, both in his principles and practice; but, by degrees, he himself was fascinated. Mr. Beauclerk's being of the St. Alban's family, and having, in some particulars, a resemblance to Charles the Second, contributed, in Johnson's imagination, to throw a lustre upon his other qualities; and, in a short time, the moral, pious Johnson, and the gay, dissipated Beauclerk, were companions. "What a coalition!" (said Garrick, when he heard of this;) "I shall have my old friend to bail out of the Round-house." Innumerable were the scenes in which Johnson was amused by these young men. Beauclerk had such a propensity to satire, that at one time Johnson said to him, "You never open your mouth but with intention to give pain; and you have often given me pain, not from the power of what you said, but from seeing your intention." At another time applying to him, with a slight alteration, a line of Pope, he said, "Thy love of folly, and thy scorn of fools—Every thing thou dost shews the one, and every thing thou say'st the other." At another time he said to him, "Thy body is all vice, and thy mind all virtue." Beauclerk not seeming to relish the compliment,

pliment, Johnson said, "Nay, Sir, Alexander the Great, marching in triumph into Babylon, could not have desired to have had more said to him."

Johnson was some time with Beauclerk at his house at Windsor, where he was entertained with experiments in natural philosophy. One Sunday, when the weather was very fine, Beauclerk enticed him, insensibly, to saunter about all the morning. They went into a church-yard, in the time of divine service, and Johnson laid himself down at his ease upon one of the tomb-stones. "Now, Sir, (said Beauclerk) you are like Hogarth's Idle Apprentice." When Johnson got his pension, Beauclerk said to him, in the humorous phrase of Falstaff, "I hope you'll now purge, and live cleanly like a gentleman."

One night when Beauclerk and Langton had supped at a tavern in London, and sat till about three in the morning, it came into their heads to go and knock up Johnson, and see if they could prevail on him to join them in a ramble. They rapped violently at the door of his chambers in the Temple, till at last he appeared in his shirt, with his little black wig on the top of his head, instead of a nightcap, and a poker in his hand, imagining, probably, that some ruffians were coming to attack him. When he discovered who they were, and was told their errand, he smiled, and with great good humour agreed to their proposal: "What, is it you, you dogs! I'll have a frisk with you." He was soon dressed, and they sallied forth together into Covent-Garden, where the green-grocers and fruiterers were beginning to arrange their hampers, just come in from the country. Johnson made some attempts to help them; but the honest gardeners stared so at his figure and manner, and odd interference, that he soon saw his services were not relished. They then repaired to one of the neighbouring

neighbouring taverns, and made a bowl of that liquor called *Bishop*, which Johnson had always liked; while in joyous contempt of sleep, from which he had been roused, he repeated the festive lines,

“Short, O short then be thy reign,
And give us to the world again!”

They did not stay long, but walked down to the Thames, took a boat, and rowed to Billingsgate. Beauclerk and Johnson were so well pleased with their amusement, that they resolved to persevere in dissipation for the rest of the day: but Langton deserted them, being engaged to breakfast with some young ladies. Johnson scolded him for “leaving his social friends, to go and sit with a set of wretched *un-idea’d* girls.” Garrick being told of this ramble, said to him smartly, “I heard of your frolic t’other night. You’ll be in the Chronicle.” Upon which Johnson afterwards observed, “*He* durst not do such a thing. His *wife* would not let him!”

He entered upon the year 1753 with his usual piety, as appears from the following prayer, transcribed from that part of his diary which he burnt a few days before his death:

“Jan. 1, 1753, N. S.

“Almighty God, who hast continued my life to this day, grant that, by the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, I may improve the time which thou shalt grant me, to my eternal salvation. Make me to remember, to thy glory, thy judgments and thy mercies. Make me so to consider the loss of my wife, whom thou hast taken from me, that it may dispose me, by thy grace, to lead the residue of my life in thy fear. Grant this, O LORD, for JESUS CHRIST’s sake. Amen.”

He now relieved the drudgery of his Dictionary, and the melancholy of his grief, by taking an active part in the composition of “*The Adventurer*,” in which he began to write April 10, marking his essays
with

with the signature T, by which most of his papers in that collection are distinguished: those, however, which have that signature and also that of *Myfargyrus*, were not written by him, but probably by Dr. Bathurst. Indeed Johnson's energy of thought and richness of language, are still more decisive marks than any signature.

Johnson's papers in the *Adventurer* are very similar to those of the *Rambler*; but being rather more varied in their subjects, and being mixed with essays by other writers, upon topics more generally attractive than even the most elegant ethical discourses, the sale of the work, at first, was more extensive.

In one of the books of his diary, Mr. B. found the following entry:

"Apr. 3, 1753. I began the second vol. of my Dictionary, room being left in the first for Preface, Grammar, and History, none of them yet begun.

"O GOD, who hast hitherto supported me, enable me to proceed in this labour, and in the whole task of my present state; that when I shall render up, at the last day, an account of the talent committed to me, I may receive pardon, for the sake of JESUS CHRIST. Amen."

1754. The Dictionary, we may believe, afforded Johnson full occupation this year. As it approached to its conclusion, he probably worked with redoubled vigour, as seamen increase their exertion and alacrity when they have a near prospect of their haven.

Lord Chesterfield, to whom Johnson had paid the high compliment of addressing to his Lordship the Plan of his Dictionary, had behaved to him in such a manner as to excite his contempt and indignation. The world has been for many years amused with a story confidently told, and as confidently repeated with additional circumstances, that a sudden disgust was taken by Johnson upon occasion of his having been

been one day kept long in waiting in his Lordship's antechamber, for which the reason assigned was, that he had company with him; and that at last, when the door opened, out walked Colley Cibber; and that Johnson was so violently provoked when he found for whom he had been so long excluded, that he went away in a passion, and never would return. It may seem strange even to entertain a doubt concerning a story so long and so widely current; but Johnson himself assured Mr. B. that there was not the least foundation for it. There never was any particular incident which produced a quarrel between Lord Chesterfield and him; his Lordship's continued neglect was the reason why he resolved to have no connection with him. When the Dictionary was upon the eve of publication, Lord Chesterfield, who, it is said, had flattered himself with expectations that Johnson would dedicate the work to him, attempted, in a courtly manner, to sooth, and insinuate himself with the sage, conscious, as it should seem, of the cold indifference with which he had treated its learned author; and further attempted to conciliate him, by writing two papers in "The World," in recommendation of the work.

The following is that celebrated letter, of which so much has been said, and about which curiosity has been so long excited, without being gratified.

To the Right Hon. the Earl of CHESTERFIELD.

"MY LORD,

February, 1755.

"I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of the World, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

F

"When,

“ When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address; and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*;—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

“ Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance*, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before.

“ The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

“ Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent,

* The following note is subjoined by Mr. Langton. “ Dr. Johnson, when he gave me this copy of his letter, desired that I would annex to it his information to me, that whereas it is said in the letter that ‘no assistance has been received,’ he did once receive from Lord Chesterfield the sum of ten pounds; but as that was so inconsiderable a sum, he thought the mention of it could not properly find place in a letter of the kind that this was.”

and

and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a Patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

“Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligations to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I shall conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

My Lord,
Your Lordship's most humble,
Most obedient servant,
SAM. JOHNSON.”

There is a curious minute circumstance in comparing the various editions of Johnson's imitations of Juvenal. In the tenth Satire, one of the couplets upon the vanity of wishes even for literary distinction stood thus ::

“Yet think what ills the scholar's life assail,
Pride, envy, want, the *garret*, and the jail.”

But after experiencing the uneasiness which Lord Chesterfield's fallacious patronage made him feel, he dismissed the word *garret* from the sad group, and in all the subsequent editions the line stands—

“Pride, envy, want, the *Patron*, and the jail.”

That Lord Chesterfield must have been mortified by the lofty contempt, and polite, yet keen satire with which Johnson exhibited him to himself in this letter, it is impossible to doubt. He, however, with that glossy duplicity which was his constant study, affected to be quite unconcerned. Dr. Adams mentioned to Mr. Robert Doddsley that he was sorry Johnson had

written his letter to Lord Chesterfield. Doddsley, with the true feelings of trade, said "he was very sorry too; for that he had a property in the Dictionary, to which his Lordship's patronage might have been of consequence." He then told Dr. Adams, that Lord Chesterfield had shewn him the letter. "I should have imagined (replied Dr. Adams) that Lord Chesterfield would have concealed it." "Poh! (said Doddsley) do you think a letter from Johnson could hurt Lord Chesterfield? Not at all, Sir. It lay upon his table, where any body might see it. He read it to me; said, 'this man has great powers,' pointed out the severest passages, and observed how well they were expressed." This air of indifference, which imposed upon the worthy Doddsley, was certainly nothing but a specimen of that dissimulation which Lord Chesterfield inculcated as one of the most essential lessons for the conduct of life. His Lordship endeavoured to justify himself to Doddsley from the charges brought against him by Johnson; but we may judge of the flimsiness of his defence, from his having excused his neglect of Johnson, by saying that "he had heard he had changed his lodgings, and did not know where he lived;" as if there could have been the smallest difficulty to inform himself of that circumstance, by inquiring in the literary circle with which his Lordship was well acquainted, and was, indeed, himself one of its ornaments.

Johnson having now explicitly avowed his opinion of Lord Chesterfield, did not refrain from expressing himself concerning that nobleman with pointed freedom: "This man (said he) I thought had been a Lord among wits; but, I find, he is only a wit among Lords!" And when his Letters to his natural son were published, he observed, that "they teach the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing-master."

In

In 1755 we behold him to great advantage; his degree of Master of Arts conferred upon him, his Dictionary published, his correspondence animated, his benevolence exercised.

To the Reverend Mr. THOMAS WARTON.

“DEAR SIR,

“I wrote to you some weeks ago, but believe did not direct accurately, and therefore know not whether you had my letter. I would, likewise, write to your brother, but know not where to find him. I now begin to see land, after having wandered, according to Mr. Warburton’s phrase, in this vast sea of words. What reception I shall meet with on the shore, I know not; whether the sound of bells, and acclamations of the people, which Ariosto talks of in his last Canto, or a general murmur of dislike, I know not: whether I shall find upon the coast a Calypso that will court, or a Polypheme that will resist. But if Polypheme comes, have at his eyes. I hope, however, the critics will let me be at peace; for though I do not much fear their skill and strength, I am a little afraid of myself, and would not willingly feel so much ill-will in my bosom as literary quarrels are apt to excite.

“Mr. Barretti is about a work for which he is in great want of Crescimbeni, which you may have again when you please.

“There is nothing considerable done or doing among us here. We are not, perhaps, as innocent as villagers, but most of us seem to be as idle. I hope, however, you are busy; and should be glad to know what you are doing. I am, dearest Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

[London,] Feb. 1, 1755.”

Mr. B. inserts the Chancellor of Oxford's letter to the University, the diploma, and Johnson's letter of thanks to the Vice-Chancellor. The former is as follows :

To the Reverend Dr. HUDDSFORD, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, to be communicated to the Heads of Houses, and proposed in Convocation.

"Mr. Vice-Chancellor, and Gentlemen,

"MR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, who was formerly of Pembroke College, having very eminently distinguished himself by the publication of a series of essays, excellently calculated to form the manners of the people, and in which the cause of religion and morality is every where maintained by the strongest powers of argument and language, and who shortly intends to publish a Dictionary of the English tongue, formed on a new plan, and executed with the greatest labour and judgment; I persuade myself that I shall act agreeably to the sentiments of the whole University, in desiring that it may be proposed in convocation to confer on him the degree of Master of Arts by diploma, to which I readily give my consent; and am,

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, and Gentlemen,

Your affectionate friend and servant,

ARRAN.

Grosvenor-street, Feb. 4, 1755."

Next follow a copy of the diploma, and Johnson's letter to the Vice-Chancellor.

Mr. Andrew Millar, bookseller in the Strand, took the principal charge of conducting the publication of Johnson's Dictionary; and as the patience of the proprietors was repeatedly tried and almost exhausted, by their expecting that the work would be completed

completed within the time which Johnson had sanguinely supposed, the learned author was often goaded to dispatch, more especially as he had received all the copy-money, by different drafts, a considerable time before he had finished his task. When the messenger who carried the last sheet to Millar returned, Johnson asked him, "Well, what did he say?"—"Sir, (answered the messenger) he said, Thank God I have done with him." "I am glad (replied Johnson, with a smile,) that he thanks God for any thing."

1755. The Dictionary, with a Grammar and History of the English Language, being now at length published, in two volumes folio, the world contemplated with wonder so stupendous a work achieved by one man, while other countries had thought such undertakings fit only for whole academies.

The extensive reading which was absolutely necessary for the accumulation of authorities, and which alone may account for Johnson's retentive mind being enriched with a very large and various store of knowledge and imagery, must have occupied several years. The Preface furnishes an eminent instance of a double talent, of which Johnson was fully conscious. Sir Joshua Reynolds has heard him say, "There are two things which I am confident I can do very well: one is an introduction to any literary work, stating what it is to contain, and how it should be executed in the most perfect manner: the other is a conclusion, shewing from various causes why the execution has not been equal to what the author promised to himself and to the public."

At the time when he was concluding his very eloquent Preface, Johnson's mind appears to have been in such a state of depression, that we cannot contemplate without wonder the vigorous and splendid thoughts which so highly distinguish that performance.

ance. "I (says he) may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which, if I could obtain in this gloom of solitude, what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please, have sunk into the grave; and success and miscarriage are empty sounds. I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise." That this indifference was rather a temporary than an habitual feeling, appears, from his letters to Mr. Warton; and however he may have been affected for the moment, certain it is that the honours which his great work procured him, both at home and abroad, were very grateful to him. His friend the Earl of Corke and Orrery, being at Florence, presented it to the *Accademia della Crusca*. That Academy sent Johnson their *Vocabulario*, and the French Academy sent him their *Dictionnaire*, which Mr. Langton had the pleasure to convey to him.

In 1756 Johnson found that the great fame of his Dictionary had not set him above the necessity of "making provision for the day that was passing over him." No royal or noble patron extended a munificent hand to give independence to the man who had conferred stability on the language of his country. We may feel indignant that there should have been such unworthy neglect; but we must, at the same time, congratulate ourselves, that to this very neglect, operating to rouse the natural indolence of his constitution, we owe many valuable productions, which otherwise, perhaps, might never have appeared.

He had spent, during the progress of the work, the money for which he had contracted to write his Dictionary. We have seen that the reward of his labour was only fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds; and when the expence of amanuenses and
paper,

paper, and other articles are deducted, his clear profit was very inconsiderable.

On the first day of this year we find from his private devotions, that he had then recovered from sickness; and in February that his eye was restored to its use. The pious gratitude with which he acknowledges mercies upon every occasion is very edifying; as is the humble submission which he breathes when it is the will of his heavenly Father to try him with afflictions. As such dispositions become the state of man here, and are the true effects of religious discipline, we cannot but venerate in Johnson one of the most exercised minds that our holy religion hath ever formed. If there be any thoughtless enough to suppose such exercise the weakness of a great understanding, let them look up to Johnson, and be convinced that what he so earnestly practised must have a rational foundation.

His works this year were, an abstract or epitome, in octavo, of his folio Dictionary, and a few essays in a monthly publication, entitled, "THE UNIVERSAL VISITER." Christopher Smart, with whose unhappy vacillation of mind he sincerely sympathised, was one of the stated undertakers of this miscellany; and it was to assist him that Johnson sometimes employed his pen.

He engaged also to superintend and contribute largely to another monthly publication, entitled "THE LITERARY MAGAZINE, OR UNIVERSAL REVIEW;" the first number of which came out in May this year. He continued to write in it, with intermissions, till the fifteenth number; and Mr. B. thinks that he never gave better proofs of the force, acuteness, and vivacity of his mind, than in this miscellany, whether we consider his original essays, or his reviews of the works of others. The "Preliminary Address" to the public is a proof how this great man could embellish even so trite a thing
as

as the plan of a magazine with the graces of superior composition.

It is worthy of remark, in justice to Johnson's political character, which has been misrepresented as abjectly submissive to power, that his "Observations on the present State of Affairs," glow with as animated a spirit of constitutional liberty as can be found any where. Thus he begins, "The time is now come, in which every Englishman expects to be informed of the national affairs, and in which he has a right to have that expectation gratified. For whatever may be urged by ministers, or those whom vanity or interest make the followers of ministers, concerning the necessity of confidence in our governors, and the presumption of prying with profane eyes into the recesses of policy, it is evident that this reverence can be claimed only by counsels yet unexecuted, and projects suspended in deliberation. But when a design has ended in miscarriage or success, when every eye and every ear is witness to general discontent, or general satisfaction, it is then a proper time to disentangle confusion and illustrate obscurity, to shew by what causes every event was produced, and in what effects it is likely to terminate; to lay down with distinct particularity what rumour always huddles in general exclamation, or perplexes by indigested narratives; to shew whence happiness or calamity is derived, and whence it may be expected; and honestly to lay before the people what inquiry can gather of the past, and conjecture can estimate of the future."

As one of the little occasional advantages which he did not disdain to take by his pen, as a man whose profession was literature, he this year accepted of a guinea from Mr. Robert Doddsley, for writing the introduction to "The London Chronicle," an evening newspaper; and even in so slight a performance exhibited peculiar talents.

He

He this year resumed his scheme of giving an edition of Shakspeare with notes. He issued Proposals of considerable length, in which he shewed that he perfectly well knew what a variety of research such an undertaking required; but his indolence prevented him from pursuing it with that diligence which alone can collect those scattered facts that genius, however acute, penetrating, and luminous, cannot discover by its own force. It is remarkable, that at this time his fancied activity was for the moment so vigorous, that he promised his work should be published before Christmas, 1757. Yet nine years elapsed before it saw the light. His throes in bringing it forth had been severe and remittent, and at last we may almost conclude that the Cæsarian operation was performed by the knife of Churchill.

“ He for subscribers bates his hook,
And takes your cash; but where's the book?
No matter where; wife fear, you know,
Forbids the robbing of a foe;
But what, to serve our private ends,
Forbids the cheating of our friends?”

About this period he was offered a living of considerable value in Lincolnshire, if he were inclined to enter into holy orders. It was a rectory in the gift of Mr. Langton, the father of his much valued friend. But he did not accept of it; partly from a conscientious motive, being persuaded that his temper and habits rendered him unfit for that assiduous and familiar instruction of the vulgar and ignorant, which he held to be an essential duty in a clergyman; and partly because his love of a London life was so strong, that he would have thought himself an exile in any other place, particularly if residing in the country.

In 1757 it does not appear that he published any thing, except some articles in the Literary Magazine. He probably prepared a part of his Shakspeare this year,

year, and he dictated a speech on the subject of an Address to the Throne, after the expedition to Rochford, which was delivered by one of his friends.

Mr. [now Dr.] Burney having enclosed to him an extract from the review of his Dictionary in the *Bibliothèque des Savans*, and a list of subscribers to his Shakspeare, which Mr. Burney had procured in Norfolk, he wrote the following answer:

To Mr. BURNEY, in Lynne, Norfolk.

"SIR,

"That I may show myself sensible of your favours, and not commit the same fault a second time, I make haste to answer the letter which I received this morning. The truth is, the other likewise was received, and I wrote an answer; but being desirous to transmit you some proposals and receipts, I waited till I could find a convenient conveyance, and day was passed after day, till other things drove it from my thoughts, yet not so, but that I remember with great pleasure your commendation of my Dictionary. Your praise was welcome, not only because I believe it was sincere, but because praise has been very scarce. A man of your candour will be surprised, when I tell you, that among all my acquaintance there were only two, who upon the publication of my book did not endeavour to depress me with threats of censure from the public, or with objections learned from those who had learned them from my own Preface. Yours is the only letter of good-will that I have received, though, indeed I am promised something of that sort from Sweden.

"How my new edition will be received I know not; the subscription has not been very successful. I shall publish about March.

"If you can direct me how to send proposals, I should wish that they were in such hands.

"I re-

“ I remember, Sir, in some of the first letters with which you favoured me, you mentioned your lady. May I enquire after her? In return for the favours which you have shewn me, it is not much to tell you, that I wish you and her all that can conduce to your happiness. I am, Sir,

Your most obliged,
And most humble servant,
SAM. JOHNSON.

Gough-square, Dec. 24, 1757.”

In 1758 we find him, it should seem, in as easy and pleasant a state of existence, as constitutional unhappiness ever permitted him to enjoy.

Soon after this, Mr. Burney, during a visit to the capital, had an interview with him in Gough-square, where he dined and drank tea with him, and was introduced to the acquaintance of Mrs. Williams. After dinner, Mr. Johnson proposed to Mr. Burney to go up with him into his garret, which being accepted, he there found about five or six Greek folios, a deal writing-desk, and a chair and a half. Johnson giving to his guest the entire seat, tottered himself on one with only three legs and one arm. Here he gave Mr. Burney Mrs. Williams’s history, and shewed him some volumes of his Shakspeare already printed, to prove that he was in earnest. Upon Mr. Burney’s opening the first volume, at the Merchant of Venice, he observed to him, that he seemed to be more severe on Warburton than Theobald. “ O poor Tib! (said Johnson) he was ready knocked down to my hands; Warburton stands between me and him.” “ But, Sir, (said Mr. Burney,) you’ll have Warburton upon your bones, won’t you?” “ No, Sir; he’ll not come out: he’ll only growl in his den.” “ But you think, Sir, that Warburton is a superior critic to Theobald?” — “ O, Sir, he’d make

two-and-fifty Theobald's, cut into slices! The worst of Warburton is, that he has a rage for saying something, when there's nothing to be said."—Mr. Burney then asked him whether he had seen the letter which Warburton had written in answer to a pamphlet addressed "To the most impudent Man alive." He answered in the negative. Mr. Burney told him it was supposed to be written by Mallet. The controversy now raged between the friends of Pope and Bolingbroke; and Warburton and Mallet were the leaders of the several parties. Mr. Burney asked him then if he had seen Warburton's book against Bolingbroke's Philosophy? "No, Sir; I have never read Bolingbroke's impiety, and therefore am not interested about its confutation."

On the fifteenth of April he began a new periodical paper, entitled "THE IDLER," which came out every Saturday in a weekly newspaper, called "The Universal Chronicle, or Weekly Gazette," published by Newbery. These essays were continued till April 5, 1760. Of one hundred and three, their total number, twelve were contributed by his friends; of which, Numbers 33, 93, and 96, were written by Mr. Thomas Warton; No. 67, by Mr. Langton; and No. 76, 79, and 82, by Sir Joshua Reynolds; the concluding words of No. 82, "and pollute his canvas with deformity," being added by Johnson.

The IDLER is evidently the work of the same mind which produced the RAMBLER, but has less body, and more spirit. It has more variety of real life, and greater facility of language. He describes the miseries of idleness, with the lively sensations of one who had felt them; and in his private memorandums while engaged in it, we find "This year I hope to learn diligence." Many of these excellent essays were written as hastily as an ordinary letter.

Mr.

Mr. Langton remembers Johnson, when on a visit at Oxford, asking him one evening how long it was till the post went out; and on being told about half an hour, he exclaimed, "then we shall do very well." He upon this instantly sat down and finished an Idler, which it was necessary should be in London the next day. Mr. Langton having signified a wish to read it, "Sir, (said he) you shall not do more than I have done myself." He then folded it up, and sent it off.

In 1759, in the month of January, his mother died, at the great age of ninety, an event which deeply affected him, not that "his mind had acquired no firmness by the contemplation of mortality," but that his reverential affection for her was not abated by years, as indeed he retained all his tender feelings even to the latest period of his life. He regretted much his not having gone to visit his mother for several years previous to her death. But he was constantly engaged in literary labours, which confined him to London; and though he had not the comfort of seeing his aged parent, he contributed liberally to her support.

Soon after this event, he wrote his *RASSELAS, PRINCE OF ABYSSINIA*; that with the profits he might defray the expence of his mother's funeral, and pay some little debts which she had left. He told Sir Joshua Reynolds that he composed it in the evenings of one week, sent it to the press in portions as it was written, and had never since read it over. Mr. Strahan, Mr. Johnston, and Mr. Doddsley purchased it for a hundred pounds, but afterwards paid him twenty-five pounds more when it came to a second edition.

Considering the large sums which have been received for compilations, and works requiring not much more genius than compilations, we cannot but

wonder at the very low price which he was content to receive for this admirable performance, which, though he had written nothing else, would have rendered his name immortal in the world of literature. None of his writings has been so extensively diffused over Europe; for it has been translated into most, if not all, of the modern languages. This Tale, with all the charms of oriental imagery, and all the force and beauty of which the English language is capable, leads us through the most important scenes of human life, and shews us that this stage of our being is full of "vanity and vexation of spirit."

It will be recollected, that during all this year he carried on his IDLER, and, no doubt, was proceeding, though slowly, in his edition of Shakspeare. He, however, from that liberality which never failed, when called upon to assist other labourers in literature, found time to translate for Mrs. Lennox's English version of Brumoy, "A Dissertation on the Greek Comedy," and the General Conclusion of the book.

He now refreshed himself by an excursion to Oxford; of which the following short characteristical notice, in his own words, is preserved: " * * * is now making tea for me. I have been in my gown ever since I came here. It was at my first coming quite new and handsome. I have swum thrice, which I had disused for many years. I have proposed to Vansittart climbing over the wall, but he has refused me. And I have clapped my hands till they are sore, at Dr. King's speech."

His negro servant, Francis Barber, having left him, and been some time at sea, not pressed as has been supposed, but with his own consent, it appears from a letter to John Wilkes, Esq. from Dr. Smollet, that his master kindly interested himself in procur-
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ing his release from a state of life of which Johnson always expressed the utmost abhorrence. He said, "No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a gaol; for being in a ship is being in a gaol, with the chance of being drowned. And at another time, "A man in a gaol has more room, better food, and commonly better company."

At this time there being a competition among the architects of London to be employed in the building of Black-friars-bridge, a question was very warmly agitated whether semicircular or elliptical arches were preferable. In the design offered by Mr. Mylne the elliptical form was adopted, and therefore it was the great object of his rivals to attack it. Johnson's regard for his friend Mr. Gwyn induced him to engage in this controversy against Mr. Mylne; and after being at considerable pains to study the subject, he wrote three several letters in the *Gazetteer*, in opposition to his plan.

In 1760 he wrote "An Address of the Painters to George III. on his Accession to the Throne of these Kingdoms," which no monarch ever ascended with more sincere congratulations from his people. Two generations of foreign princes had prepared their minds to rejoice in having again a King, who gloried in being "born a Briton." He also wrote for Mr. Baretti the Dedication of his Italian and English Dictionary, to the Marquis of Abreu, then Ambassador Extraordinary from Spain at the Court of Great Britain.

Johnson was now either very idle, or very busy with his *Shakspeare*; for Mr. B. can find no other public composition by him except an account which he gave in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of Mr. Tytler's acute and able vindication of Mary Queen of Scots. The generosity of Johnson's feelings

shines forth in the following sentence : " It has now been fashionable, for near half a century, to defame and vilify the house of Stuart, and to exalt and magnify the reign of Elizabeth. The Stuarts have found few apologists ; for the dead cannot pay for praise, and who will, without reward, oppose the tide of popularity ? Yet there remains still among us, not wholly extinguished, a zeal for truth, a desire of establishing right in opposition to fashion."

An acquaintance first commenced between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Murphy in the following manner. During the publication of " The Gray's-Inn Journal," a periodical paper which was successfully carried on by Mr. Murphy alone, when a very young man, he happened to be in the country with Mr. Foote ; and having mentioned that he was obliged to go to London in order to get ready for the press one of the numbers of that Journal, Foote said to him, " You need not go on that account. Here is a French magazine, in which you will find a very pretty oriental tale ; translate that, and send it to your printer." Mr. Murphy having read the tale, was highly pleased with it, and followed Foote's advice. When he returned to town, this tale was pointed out to him in the Rambler, from whence it had been translated into the French magazine. Mr. Murphy then waited upon Johnson, to explain this curious incident. His talents, literature, and gentlemanlike manners, were soon perceived by Johnson, and a friendship was formed which was never broken.

In 1761 Johnson appears to have done little. He was still, no doubt, proceeding in his edition of Shakspeare ; but what advances he made in it cannot be ascertained. He, however, contributed this year the Preface to " Rolt's Dictionary of Trade and Commerce," in which he displays such a clear and comprehensive knowledge of the subject, as might lead

lead the reader to think that its author had devoted all his life to it. Mr. B. asked him, whether he knew much of Rolt, and of his work. "Sir, (said he) I never saw the man, and never read the book. The booksellers wanted a Preface to a Dictionary of Trade and Commerce. I knew very well what such a Dictionary should be, and I wrote a Preface accordingly."

Johnson had now for some years admitted Mr. Baretto to his intimacy; nor did their friendship cease upon their being separated by Baretto's revisiting his native country.

An inquiry into the state of foreign countries was an object that seems at all times to have interested Johnson. Hence Mr. Newbery found no great difficulty in persuading him to write the Introduction to a collection of voyages and travels published by him under the title of "The World Displayed." The first volume appeared in 1759, and the remaining volumes in subsequent years.

In 1762 he wrote for the Reverend Dr. Kennedy, Rector of Bradley in Derbyshire, in a strain of very courtly elegance, a Dedication to the King of that gentleman's work, entitled "A complete System of astronomical Chronology, unfolding the Scriptures."

The accession of George the Third to the throne, opened a new and brighter prospect to men of literary merit, who had been honoured with no mark of royal favour in the preceding reign. His present Majesty's education in this country, as well as his taste and beneficence, prompted him to be the patron of science and the arts; and early this year Johnson having been represented to him as a very learned and good man, without any certain provision, his Majesty was pleased to grant him a pension of three hundred pounds a year. The Earl of Bute was then
prime

prime minister, and had the honour to announce this instance of his sovereign's bounty, concerning which many and various stories, all equally erroneous, have been propagated, maliciously representing it as a political bribe to Johnson to desert his avowed principles, and become the tool of a government which he held to be founded in usurpation.

Johnson called on Sir Joshua Reynolds after his Majesty's intention had been notified to him, and said he wished to consult his friends as to the propriety of his accepting this mark of the royal favour, after the definitions which he had given in his Dictionary of *pension* and *pensioners*. He said he would not have Sir Joshua's answer till next day, when he would call again, and desired he might think of it. Sir Joshua answered, that he was clear to give his opinion then, that there could be no objection to his receiving from the King a reward for literary merit; and that certainly the definitions in his Dictionary were not applicable to him. Johnson, it should seem, was satisfied, for he did not call again till he had accepted the pension, and had waited on Lord Bute to thank him. He then told Sir Joshua that Lord Bute said to him expressly, "It is not given you for any thing you are to do, but for what you have done." His Lordship, he said, behaved in the handsomest manner. He repeated the words twice, that he might be sure that Johnson heard them, and thus set his mind perfectly at ease.

His definitions of *pension* and *pensioner*, partly founded on the satirical verses of Pope, which he quotes, may be generally true; and yet every body must allow, that there may be, and have been, instances of pensions given and received upon liberal and honourable terms. Thus, then, it is clear, that there was nothing inconsistent or humiliating in
Johnson's

Johnson's accepting of a pension so unconditionally and so honourably offered to him.

This year [1762] his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds paid a visit of some weeks to his native county, Devonshire, in which he was accompanied by Johnson, who was much pleased with his jaunt, and declared he had derived from it a great accession of new ideas. He was entertained at the seats of several noblemen and gentlemen in the west of England; but the greatest part of the time was passed at Plymouth, where the magnificence of the navy, the ship-building and all its circumstances, afforded him a grand subject of contemplation. The Commissioner of the Dock-yard paid him the compliment of ordering the yacht to convey him and his friend to the Eddystone, to which they accordingly sailed.

We must not pass over Mr. Boswell's account of the commencement of his acquaintance with Dr. Johnson, which took place in 1763. "Though
" but two-and-twenty, I had for several years (says
" Mr. B.) read his works with delight and in-
" struction, and had the highest reverence for their
" author, which had grown up in my fancy into a
" kind of mysterious veneration, by figuring to
" myself a state of solemn elevated abstraction, in
" which I supposed him to live in the immense me-
" tropolis of London. Mr. Gentleman, a native
" of Ireland, who passed some years in Scotland as
" a player, and as an instructor in the English lan-
" guage, a man whose talents and worth were de-
" pressed by misfortunes, had given me a repre-
" sentation of his figure and manner; and during
" my first visit to London, which was for three
" months in 1760, Mr. Derrick the poet, who
" was Gentleman's friend and countryman, flat-
" tered me with hopes that he would introduce
" me to Johnson, an honour of which I was very
" ambitious.

“ ambitious. But he never found an opportunity,
“ which made me doubt that he had promised to do
“ what was not in his power, till Johnson some
“ years afterwards told me, ‘ Derrick, Sir, might
“ very well have introduced you. I had a kindness
“ for Derrick, and am sorry he is dead.’

“ In the summer of 1761, Mr. Thomas Sheridan
“ was at Edinburgh, and delivered lectures upon the
“ English Language and Public Speaking to large
“ and respectable audiences. I was often in his
“ company, and heard him frequently expatiate
“ upon Johnson’s extraordinary knowledge, talents,
“ and virtues, repeat his pointed sayings, describe
“ his particularities, and boast of his being his
“ guest sometimes till two or three in the morning.
“ At his house I hoped to have many opportunities of
“ seeing the sage, as Mr. Sheridan obligingly assured
“ me I should not be disappointed.

“ When I returned to London in the end of
“ 1762, to my surprize and regret I found an irre-
“ concilable difference had taken place between
“ Johnson and Sheridan. A pension of two hun-
“ dred pounds a year had been given to Sheridan.
“ Johnson, who thought slightly of Sheridan’s
“ art, upon hearing that he was also pen-
“ sioned, exclaimed with no little energy, ‘ What!
“ have they given *him* a pension? Then it is
“ time for me to give up mine.’ Whether this
“ proceeded from a momentary indignation, as
“ if it were an affront to his exalted merit, that a
“ player should be rewarded in the same manner
“ with him, or was the sudden effect of a fit of
“ peevishness, it was unluckily said, and, indeed,
“ cannot be justified. Mr. Sheridan’s pension was
“ granted to him not as a player, but as a sufferer
“ in the cause of government, when he was mana-
“ ger of the Theatre Royal in Ireland, when parties
“ ran

“ ran high in 1753. And it must also be allowed that
“ he was a man of literature, and had considerably
“ improved the arts of reading and speaking with
“ distinctness and propriety.

“ Johnson complained that a man who disliked
“ him repeated his sarcasm to Mr. Sheridan, with-
“ out telling him what followed, which was, that
“ after a pause he added, ‘ However, I am glad
“ that Mr. Sheridan has a pension, for he is a very
“ good man.’ Sheridan could never forgive this
“ hasty contemptuous expression. It rankled in his
“ mind; and though I informed him of all that
“ Johnson said, and that he would be very glad to
“ meet him amicably, he positively declined repeated
“ offers which I made, and once went off abruptly
“ from a house where he and I were engaged to
“ dine, because he was told that Dr. Johnson was
“ to be there.

“ Mr. Thomas Davies the actor, who then kept
“ a bookseller’s shop in Ruffel-street, Covent-gar-
“ den, told me that Johnson was very much his
“ friend, and came frequently to his house, where
“ he more than once invited me to meet him; but
“ by some unlucky accident or other he was pre-
“ vented from coming to us.

“ At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I
“ was sitting in Mr. Davies’s back parlour, after
“ having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies,
“ Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and
“ Mr. Davies having perceived him through the
“ glass door of the room in which we were sitting,
“ advancing towards us,—he announced his awful
“ approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an
“ actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses
“ Hamlet on the appearance of his father’s ghost,
“ ‘ Look, my Lord, it comes.’ I found that I had
“ a very perfect idea of Johnson’s figure, from the
“ portrait

“ portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds
“ soon after he had published his Dictionary, in the
“ attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep medi-
“ tation. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and
“ respectfully introduced me to him. I was much
“ agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against
“ the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said
“ to Davies, ‘ Don’t tell where I come from.’—
“ ‘ From Scotland,’ cried Davies, roguishly. ‘ Mr.
“ Johnson (said I) I do indeed come from Scotland,
“ but I cannot help it.’ I am willing to flatter my-
“ self that I meant this as light pleasantry to sooth
“ and conciliate him, and not as any humiliating
“ abasement at the expence of my country. But
“ however that might be, this speech was somewhat
“ unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which
“ he was so remarkable, he seized the expression
“ ‘ come from Scotland,’ which I used in the sense
“ of being of that country; and as if I had said
“ that I had come away from it or left it, retorted,
“ ‘ That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of
“ your countrymen cannot help.’ This stroke stunned
“ me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I
“ felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehen-
“ sive of what might come next. He then addressed
“ himself to Davies: ‘ What do you think of
“ Garrick? He has refused me an order for the
“ play for Miss Williams, because he knows the
“ house will be full, and that an order would be
“ worth three shillings.’ Eager to take any open-
“ ing to get into conversation with him, I ventured
“ to say, ‘ O, Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick
“ would grudge such a trifle to you.’ ‘ Sir, (said
“ he, with a stern look,) I have known David
“ Garrick longer than you have done; and I know
“ no right you have to talk to me on the subject.’
“ Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather
“ presumptuous

“ presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts.

“ I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigour of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, ‘ Don’t be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well.’

“ A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So upon Tuesday the 24th, after having been enlivened by the witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton, Wilkes, Churchill and Lloyd, with whom I had passed the morning, I boldly repaired to Johnson. His chambers were on the first floor of No. 1, Inner Temple-lane, and I entered them with an impression given me by the Reverend Dr. Blair, of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to him not

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“ long

“ long before, and described his having ‘ found the
“ giant in his den.’

“ He received me very courteously ; but, it
“ must be confessed, that his apartment, and furni-
“ ture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth.
“ His brown suit of cloaths looked very rusty ; he
“ had on a little old shrivelled unpowdered wig,
“ which was too small for his head ; his shirt-neck
“ and knees of his breeches were loose ; his black
“ worsted stockings ill drawn up ; and he had a pair
“ of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all
“ these slovenly particularities were forgotten the
“ moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen,
“ whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him ;
“ and when they went away, I also rose ; but he
“ said to me, ‘ Nay, don’t go.’—‘ Sir, (said I) I am
“ afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent
“ to allow me to sit and hear you.’ He seemed
“ pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely
“ paid him, and answered, ‘ Sir, I am obliged to
“ any man who visits me.’

“ When I rose a second time he again pressed me
“ to stay, which I did.

“ He told me, that he generally went abroad at
“ four in the afternoon, and seldom came home till
“ two in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if
“ he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not
“ make more use of his great talents. He owned
“ it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the dis-
“ tance of many years, my journal of this period, I
“ wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured to talk
“ to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much
“ indulgence.

“ Before we parted he was so good as to promise
“ to favour me with his company one evening at my
“ lodgings ; and, as I took my leave, shook me
“ cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to

“ add,

“ add, that I felt no little elation at having now so
“ happily established an acquaintance of which I
“ had been so long ambitious.

“ I had learnt that his place of frequent resort
“ was the Mitre tavern in Fleet-street, where he
“ loved to sit up late, and I begged I might be al-
“ lowed to pass an evening with him there soon,
“ which he promised I should. A few days after-
“ wards I met him near Temple-bar, about one
“ o’clock in the morning, and asked if he would then
“ go to the Mitre. ‘ Sir, (said he) it is too late; they
“ won’t let us in. But I’ll go with you another
“ night with all my heart.”

Johnson had a very philosophical mind, and such a rational respect for testimony, as to make him submit his understanding to what was authentically proved, though he could not comprehend why it was so. Being thus disposed, he was willing to inquire into the truth of any relation of supernatural agency, a general belief of which has prevailed in all nations and ages. But so far was he from being the dupe of implicit faith, that he examined the matter with a jealous attention, and no man was more ready to refute its falshood when he had discovered it. Churchill, in his poem entitled “ The Ghost,” availed himself of the absurd credulity imputed to Johnson, and drew a caricature of him under the name of “ Pomposo,” representing him as one of the believers of the story of a Ghost in Cock-lane, which in the year 1762 had gained very general credit in London. Johnson, however, was one of those by whom the imposture was detected. The story had become so popular, that he thought it should be investigated; and in this research he was assisted by the Reverend Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Carlisle, the great detector of impostures, who says, that after the gentlemen who went and examined

mined into the evidence were satisfied of its falsity, Johnson wrote in their presence an account of it, which was published in the newspapers and Gentleman's Magazine, and undeceived the world.

The account was as follows: "On the night of the 1st of February, many gentlemen, eminent for their rank and character, were, by the invitation of the Reverend Mr. Aldrich, of Clerkenwell, assembled at his house, for the examination of the noises supposed to be made by a departed spirit, for the detection of some enormous crime.

"About ten at night the gentlemen met in the chamber in which the girl supposed to be disturbed by a spirit, had, with proper caution, been put to bed by several ladies. They sat rather more than an hour, and hearing nothing, went down stairs, when they interrogated the father of the girl, who denied, in the strongest terms, any knowledge or belief of fraud.

"The supposed spirit had before publicly promised, by an affirmative knock, that it would attend one of the gentlemen into the vault under the church of St. John, Clerkenwell, where the body is deposited, and give a token of her presence there, by a knock upon her coffin; it was therefore determined to make this trial of the existence or veracity of the supposed spirit.

"While they were enquiring and deliberating, they were summoned into the girl's chamber by some ladies who were near her bed, and who had heard knocks and scratches. When the gentlemen entered, the girl declared that she felt the spirit like a mouse upon her back, and was required to hold her hands out of bed. From that time, though the spirit was very solemnly required to manifest its existence by appearance, by impression on the hand or body of any present, by scratches, knocks, or any other

other agency, no evidence of any preter-natural power was exhibited.

"The spirit was then very seriously advertised that the person to whom the promise was made of striking the coffin, was then about to visit the vault, and that the performance of the promise was then claimed. The company at one o'clock went into the church, and the gentleman to whom the promise was made, went with another into the vault. The spirit was solemnly required to perform its promise, but nothing more than silence ensued: the person supposed to be accused by the spirit, then went down with several others, but no effect was perceived. Upon their return they examined the girl, but could draw no confession from her. Between two and three she desired and was permitted to go home with her father.

"It is, therefore, the opinion of the whole assembly, that the child has some art of making or counterfeiting a particular noise, and that there is no agency of any higher cause."

Talking of London, he observed to Mr. B. "Sir, if you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of this city, you must not be satisfied with seeing its great streets and squares, but must survey the innumerable little lanes and courts. It is not in the shewy evolutions of buildings, but in the multiplicity of human habitations which are crowded together, that the wonderful immensity of London consists."

To such a degree of unrestrained frankness had Dr. Johnson now accustomed Mr. Boswell, that he talked to the Doctor of the numerous reflections which had been thrown out against him on account of his having accepted a pension from his present Majesty. "Why, Sir, (said he, with a hearty laugh) it is a mighty foolish noise that they
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make.

make. I have accepted of a pension as a reward which has been thought due to my literary merit; and now that I have this pension, I am the same man in every respect that I have ever been; I retain the same principles. It is true, that I cannot now curse (*smiling*) the house of Hanover; nor would it be decent for me to drink King James's health in the wine that King George gives me money to pay for. But, Sir, I think that the pleasure of cursing the house of Hanover, and drinking King James's health, are amply overbalanced by three hundred pounds a year."

As Mr. B. and the Doctor walked along the Strand one night, arm in arm, a woman of the town accosted them, in the usual enticing manner. "No, no, my girl, (*said* Johnson,) it won't do." He, however, did not treat her with harshness; talked of the wretched life of such women; and agreed, that much more misery than happiness, upon the whole, is produced by illicit commerce between the sexes.

Sunday, July 31, 1763, Mr. B. told him he had been that morning at a meeting of the people called Quakers, where he had heard a woman preach. Johnson said, "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprized to find it done at all."

Before Mr. B. set out for foreign parts, he had the misfortune to irritate his great friend unintentionally. Mr. B. mentioned to him how common it was in the world to tell absurd stories of him, and to ascribe to him very strange sayings. JOHNSON.

"What do they make me say, Sir?" BOSWELL.

"Why, Sir, as an instance very strange indeed, David Hume told me, you said that you would stand before a battery of cannon, to restore the Convocation to its full powers."—Little did Mr. B. apprehend

apprehend that he had actually said this ; but he was soon convinced of his error ; for, with a determined look, he thundered out, " And would I not, Sir ? Shall the Presbyterian *Kirk* of Scotland have its General Assembly, and the Church of England be denied its Convocation ? " He was walking up and down the room while Mr. B. told him the anecdote ; but when he uttered this explosion of high-church zeal, he had come close to Mr. B.'s chair, his eyes flashing with indignation. Mr. B. bowed to the storm, and diverted the force of it, by leading him to expatiate on the influence which religion derived from maintaining the church with great external respectability.

Early in 1764 Johnson paid a visit to the Langton family, at their seat of Langton, in Lincolnshire, where he passed some time, much to his satisfaction. His friend Bennet Langton, it will not be doubted, did every thing in his power to make the place agreeable to so illustrious a guest ; and the elder Mr. Langton and his lady, being fully capable of understanding his value, were not wanting in attention.

Soon after his return to London, which was in February, was founded that club which existed long without a name, but at Mr. Garrick's funeral became distinguished by the title of THE LITERARY CLUB. Sir Joshua Reynolds had the merit of being the first proposer of it, to which Johnson acceded, and the original members were, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Edmund Burke, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Langton, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Chamier, and Sir John Hawkins. They met at the Turk's Head, in Gerard-street, Soho, one evening in every week, at seven, and generally continued their conversation till a pretty late hour. This club has been gradually increased, and instead of assembling in the evening, they now dine together

ther at a tavern in Dover-street, once a fortnight during the meeting of Parliament. Between the time of its formation, and the year 1790, the following persons, now dead, were members of it: Mr. Dunning, (afterwards Lord Ashburton) Mr. Dyer, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph, Mr. Vesey, and Mr. Thomas Warton.

In this year, except what he may have done in revising Shakspeare, we do not find that he laboured much in literature. He wrote a review of Grainger's "Sugar Cane, a Poem," in the London Chronicle.

The ease and independence to which he had at last attained by royal munificence, increased his natural indolence. In his "Meditations" he thus accuses himself: "GOOD FRIDAY, April 20, 1764. I have made no reformation; I have lived totally useless, more sensual in thought, and more addicted to wine and meat." And next morning he thus feelingly complains: "My indolence, since my last reception of the sacrament, has sunk into grosser sluggishness, and my dissipation spread into wilder negligence. My thoughts have been clouded with sensuality; and, except that from the beginning of this year I have, in some measure, forborn excess of strong drink, my appetites have predominated over my reason. A kind of strange oblivion has overspread me, so that I know not what has become of the last year; and perceive that incidents and intelligence pass over me, without leaving any impression." He then solemnly says, "This is not the life to which heaven is promised;" and he earnestly resolves on amendment.

It was his custom to observe certain days with a pious abstraction; viz. New-year's-day, the day of his wife's death, Good Friday, Easter-day, and his own birth-day. He this year [1764] says, "I have now spent fifty-five years in resolving; having, from the earliest

liest time almost that I can remember, been forming schemes of a better life. I have done nothing. The need of doing, therefore, is pressing, since the time of doing is short. O GOD, grant me to resolve aright, and to keep my resolutions, for JESUS CHRIST's sake. Amen."

About this time he was afflicted with a very severe return of the hypochondriac disorder, which was ever lurking about him. He was so ill, as, notwithstanding his remarkable love of company, to be entirely averse to society, the most fatal symptom of that malady. Dr. Adams told Mr. B. that, as an old friend, he was admitted to visit him, and that he found him in a deplorable state, sighing, groaning, talking to himself, and restlessly walking from room to room. He then used this emphatical expression of the misery which he felt: "I would consent to have a limb amputated to recover my spirits."

That the most minute singularities which belonged to him, and made very observable parts of his appearance and manner, may not be omitted, it is requisite to mention, that while talking or even musing as he sat in his chair, he commonly shook his head in a tremulous manner, moving his body backwards and forwards, and rubbing his left knee in the same direction, with the palm of his hand. In the intervals of articulating he made various sounds with his mouth, sometimes as if ruminating, or what is called chewing the cud, sometimes giving a half whistle, sometimes making his tongue play backwards from the roof of his mouth, as if clucking like a hen, and sometimes protruding it against his upper gums in front, as if pronouncing quickly under his breath, *too, too, too*: all this accompanied sometimes with a thoughtful look, but more frequently with a smile.

Early

Early in the year 1765 he paid a short visit to the University of Cambridge, with his friend Mr. Beauclerk. There is a lively picturesque account of his behaviour on this visit, in the Gentleman's Magazine for March 1785, being an extract of a letter from the late Dr. John Sharp. The two following sentences are very characteristical: "He drank his large potations of tea with me, interrupted by many an indignant contradiction, and many a noble sentiment."—"Several persons got into his company the last evening at Trinity, where, about twelve, he began to be very great; stripped poor Mrs. Macauley to the very skin, then gave her for his toast, and drank her in two bumpers."

He appears this year to have been seized with a temporary fit of ambition, for he had thoughts both of studying law and of engaging in politics.

This year was also distinguished by his being introduced into the family of Mr. Thrale, one of the most eminent brewers in England, and Member of Parliament for the borough of Southwark. Foreigners are not a little amazed when they hear of brewers, distillers, and men in similar departments of trade, held forth as persons of considerable consequence. Johnson used to give this account of the rise of Mr. Thrale's father: "He worked at six shillings a week for twenty years in the great brewery, which afterwards was his own. The proprietor of it had an only daughter, who was married to a nobleman. It was not fit that a peer should continue the business. On the old man's death, therefore, the brewery was to be sold. To find a purchaser for so large a property was a difficult matter; and, after some time, it was suggested, that it would be adviseable to treat with Thrale, a sensible, active, honest man, who had been long employed in the house, and to transfer the whole to him for thirty thousand

thousand pounds, security being taken upon the property. This was accordingly settled. In eleven years Thrale paid the purchase-money. He acquired a large fortune, and lived to be Member of Parliament for Southwark. But what was most remarkable was the liberality with which he used his riches. He gave his son and daughters the best education. The esteem which his good conduct procured him from the nobleman who had married his master's daughter, made him be treated with much attention; and his son, both at school and at the University of Oxford, associated with young men of the first rank. His allowance from his father, after he left college, was splendid; no less than a thousand a year. This, in a man who had risen as old Thrale did, was a very extraordinary instance of generosity. He used to say, 'If this young dog does not find so much after I am gone as he expects, let him remember that he has had a great deal in my own time.'

Mr. Thrale had married Miss Hesther Lynch Salisbury, of good Welch extraction, a lady of lively talents, improved by education. That Johnson's introduction into Mr. Thrale's family, which contributed so much to the happiness of his life, was owing to her desire for his conversation, is the most probable and general supposition. But it is not the truth. Mr. Murphy, who was intimate with Mr. Thrale, having spoken very highly of Dr. Johnson, he was requested to make them acquainted. This being mentioned to Johnson, he accepted of an invitation to dinner at Thrale's, and was so much pleased with his reception, both by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and they so much pleased with him, that his invitations to their house were more and more frequent, till at last he became one of the family, and an apartment was appropriated to him, both in their house in Southwark, and in their villa at Streatham.

Nothing

Nothing could be more fortunate for Johnson than this connection. He had at Mr. Thrale's all the comforts and even luxuries of life; his melancholy was diverted, and his irregular habits lessened by association with an agreeable and well ordered family. He was treated with the utmost respect, and even affection. The vivacity of Mrs. Thrale's literary talk roused him to cheerfulness and exertion, even when they were alone. But this was not often the case; for he found here a constant succession of what gave him the highest enjoyment, the society of the learned, the witty, and the eminent in every way, who were assembled in numerous companies, called forth his wonderful powers, and gratified him with admiration, to which no man could be insensible.

In the October of this year he at length gave to the world his edition of Shakspeare, which, if it had no other merit but that of producing his Preface, in which the excellencies and defects of that immortal bard are displayed with a masterly hand, the nation would have had no reason to complain. A blind indiscriminate admiration of Shakspeare had exposed the British nation to the ridicule of foreigners. Johnson, by candidly admitting the faults of his poet, had the more credit in bestowing on him deserved and indisputable praise; and doubtless none of all his panegyrists have done him half so much honour.

Trinity College, Dublin, at this time surprised Johnson with a spontaneous compliment of the highest academical honours, by creating him Doctor of Laws.

This unsolicited mark of distinction, conferred on so great a literary character, did much honour to the judgment and liberal spirit of that learned body.

Johnson

Johnson acknowledged the favour in a letter to Dr. Leland, one of their number.

Johnson in 1766, lived in a good house in Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, in which he had accommodated Miss Williams with an apartment on the ground floor, while Mr. Levet occupied his post in the garret; his faithful Francis (a black servant) still attending upon him.

He used to say of Goldsmith's Traveller, "There has not been so fine a poem since Pope's time."

And here it is proper to settle, with authentic precision, what has long floated in public report, as to Johnson's being himself the author of a considerable part of that poem. But in the year 1783, he marked with a pencil the lines which he had furnished, which are only line 420,

"To stop too fearful, and too faint to go;"

and the concluding ten lines, except the last couplet but one, distinguished by the Italic character:

"How small of all that human hearts endure,
That part which kings or laws can cause or cure.
Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,
Our own felicity we make or find;
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.
*The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel,
Luke's iron crown, and Damien's bed of steel,*
To men remote from power, but rarely known,
Leave reason, faith, and conscience, all our own."

Dr. Johnson favoured Mr. B. by marking the lines which he furnished to Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," which are only the four last:

"That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away:
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky."

One evening, Dr. Goldsmith and Mr. Boswell called on him, with the hope of prevailing on him to sup with us at the Mitre. They found him indisposed, and resolved not to go abroad. "Come then, (said Goldsmith,) we will not go to the Mitre to-night, since we cannot have the big man with us." Johnson then called for a bottle of port, of which Goldsmith and Mr. B. partook, while the Doctor, now a water drinker, sat by. GOLDSMITH. "I think, Mr. Johnson, you don't go near the theatres now. You give yourself no more concern about a new play, than if you had never had any thing to do with the stage." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, our tastes greatly alter. The lad does not care for the child's rattle, and the old man does not care for the young man's whore." GOLDSMITH. "Nay, Sir; but your Muse was not a whore." JOHNSON. "Sir, I do not think she was. But as we advance in the journey of life, we drop some of the things which have pleased us; whether it be that we are fatigued and don't choose to carry so many things any farther, or that we find other things which we like better." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, why don't you give us something in some other way?" GOLDSMITH. "Ay, Sir, we have a claim upon you." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, I am not obliged to do any more. No man is obliged to do as much as he can do. A man is to have part of his life to himself. If a soldier has fought a good many campaigns, he is not to be blamed if he retires to ease and tranquillity. A physician, who has practised long in a great city, may be excused if he retires to a small town, and takes less practice. Now, Sir, the good I can do by my conversation bears the same proportion to the good I can do by my writings, that the practice of a physician, retired to a small town, does

does to his practice in a great city." BOSWELL. "But I wonder, Sir, you have not more pleasure in writing than in not writing." JOHNSON. "Sir, you *may* wonder."

He talked of making verses, and observed, "The great difficulty is to know when you have made good ones. When composing, I have generally had them in my mind, perhaps fifty at a time, walking up and down in my room; and then I have wrote them down, and often, from laziness, have written only half lines. I have written a hundred lines in a day. I remember I wrote a hundred lines of 'The Vanity of human Wishes' in a day. Doctor, (turning to Goldsmith,) I am not quite idle; I made one line t'other day; but I made no more." GOLDSMITH. "Let us hear it; we'll put a bad one to it." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; I have forgot it."

It appears from his diary, that he was this year (i. e. 1766) at Mr. Thrale's, from before Midsummer till after Michaelmas, and that he afterwards passed a month at Oxford. He had then contracted a great intimacy with Mr. Chambers, of that University, now Sir Robert Chambers, one of the Judges in India.

He published nothing this year in his own name; but the noble Dedication to the King, of Gwyn's "London and Westminster Improved," was written by him; and he furnished the Preface, and several of the pieces, which compose a volume of Miscellanies by Mrs. Anna Williams, the blind lady who had an asylum in his house.

Mr. Cuthbert Shaw, alike distinguished by his genius, misfortunes, and misconduct, published this year a poem, called "The Race, by Mercurius Spur, Esq." in which he whimsically made the liv-

ing poets of England contend for pre-eminence of fame by running:

“ Prove by their heels the prowess of the head.”

In this poem there was the following portrait of Johnson:

“ Here Johnson comes,—unblest with outward grace,
His rigid morals stamp'd upon his face.
While strong conceptions struggle in his brain;
(For even Wit is brought to-bed with pain):
To view him, porters with their loads would rest,
And babes cling frighted to the nurse's breast.
With looks convuls'd, he roars in pompous strain,
And, like an angry lion, shakes his mane.
The Nine, with terror struck, who ne'er had seen,
Aught human with so horrible a mien,
Debating whether they should stay or run,
Virtue steps forth, and claims him for her son.
With gentle speech she warns him now to yield,
Nor stain his glories in the doubtful field;
But wrapt in conscious worth, content sit down,
Since Fame, resolv'd his various pleas to crown,
Though forc'd his present claim to disavow,
Had long reserv'd a chaplet for his brow.
He bows, obeys; for Time shall first expire,
Ere Johnson stay, when Virtue bids retire.”

In February, 1767, there happened one of the most remarkable incidents of Johnson's life, which gratified his monarchical enthusiasm, and which he loved to relate with all its circumstances, when requested by his friends. This was his being honoured by a private conversation with his Majesty, in the library at the Queen's house. He had frequently visited those splendid rooms and noble collection of books, which he used to say was more numerous and curious than he supposed any person could have made in the time which the King had employed. Mr. Barnard, the librarian, took care that he should have every accommodation that could contribute to his ease and convenience, while indulging

ing his literary taste in that place; so that he had here a very agreeable resource at leisure hours.

His Majesty having been informed of his occasional visits, was pleased to signify a desire that he should be told when Dr. Johnson came next to the library. Accordingly, the next time that Johnson did come, as soon as he was fairly engaged with a book, on which, while he sat by the fire, he seemed quite intent, Mr. Barnard stole round to the apartment where the King was, and, in obedience to his Majesty's commands, mentioned that Dr. Johnson was then in the library. His Majesty said he was at leisure, and would go to him; upon which Mr. Barnard took one of the candles that stood on the King's table, and lighted his Majesty through a suite of rooms, till they came to a private door into the library, of which his Majesty had the key. Being entered, Mr. Barnard stepped forward hastily to Dr. Johnson, who was still in a profound study, and whispered him, "Sir, here is the King." Johnson started up, and stood still. His Majesty approached him, and at once was courteously easy.

His Majesty began by observing, that he understood he came sometimes to the library; and then mentioning his having heard that the Doctor had been lately at Oxford, asked him if he was not fond of going thither. To which Johnson answered, that he was indeed fond of going to Oxford sometimes, but was likewise glad to come back again. The King then asked him what they were doing at Oxford. Johnson answered, he could not much commend their diligence, but that in some respects they were mended, for they had put their press under better regulations, and were at that time printing Polybius. He was then asked whether there were better libraries at Oxford or Cambridge. He answered, he believed the Bodleian was larger than
I 3 any

any they had at Cambridge; at the same time adding, "I hope, whether we have more books or not than they have at Cambridge, we shall make as good use of them as they do." Being asked whether All-Souls or Christ-Church library was the largest, he answered, "All-Souls library is the largest we have, except the Bodleian." "Aye, (said the King,) that is the public library."

His Majesty enquired if he was then writing any thing. He answered, he was not, for he had pretty well told the world what he knew, and must now read to acquire more knowledge. The King, as it should seem with a view to urge him to rely on his own stores as an original writer, and to continue his labours, then said, "I do not think you borrow much from any body." Johnson said, he thought he had already done his part as a writer. "I should have thought so too, (said the King,) if you had not written so well."—Johnson observed to Mr. B. upon this, that "No man could have paid a handfomer compliment; and it was fit for a king to pay. It was decisive." When asked by another friend, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, whether he made any reply to this high compliment, he answered, "No, Sir. When the King had said it, it was to be so. It was not for me to bandy civilities with my sovereign." Perhaps no man who had spent his whole life in courts could have shewn a more nice and dignified sense of true politeness, than Johnson did in this instance.

His Majesty having observed to him that he supposed he must have read a great deal; Johnson answered, that he *thought* more than he *read*; that he had read a great deal in the early part of his life, but having fallen into ill health, he had not been able to read much, compared with others: for instance, he said he had not read much compared with

with Dr. Warburton. Upon which the King said, that he heard Dr. Warburton was a man of such general knowledge, that you could scarce talk with him on any subject on which he was not qualified to speak; and that his learning resembled Garrick's acting, in its universality. His Majesty then talked of the controversy between Warburton and Lowth, which he seemed to have read, and asked Johnson what he thought of it. Johnson answered, "Warburton has most general, most scholastic learning; Lowth is the more correct scholar. I do not know which of them calls names best." The King was pleased to say he was of the same opinion; adding, "You do not think then, Dr. Johnson, that there was much argument in the case." Johnson said, he did not think there was. "Why truly, (said the King,) when once it comes to calling names, argument is pretty well at an end."

His Majesty then asked him what he thought of Lord Lyttelton's history, which was then just published. Johnson said, he thought his style pretty good, but that he had blamed Henry the Second rather too much. "Why, (said the King,) they seldom do these things by halves." "No, Sir, (answered Johnson,) not to kings." But fearing to be misunderstood, he proceeded to explain himself; and immediately subjoined, "That for those who spoke worse of kings than they deserved, he could find no excuse, but that he could more easily conceive how some might speak better of them than they deserved, without any ill intention; for, as kings had much in their power to give, those who were favoured by them would frequently, from gratitude, exaggerate their praises; and as this proceeded from a good motive, it was certainly excusable, as far as error could be excusable."

The

The King then asked him what he thought of Dr. Hill. Johnson answered, that he was an ingenious man, but had no veracity; and immediately mentioned, as an instance of it, an assertion of that writer, that he had seen objects magnified to a much greater degree by using three or four microscopes at a time, than by using one. "Now, (added Johnson,) every one acquainted with microscopes knows, that the more of them he looks through, the less the object will appear." "Why, (replied the King,) this is not only telling an untruth, but telling it clumsily; for, if that be the case, every one who can look through a microscope will be able to detect him."

"I now (said Johnson to his friends, when relating what had passed,) began to consider that I was depreciating this man in the estimation of his sovereign, and thought it was time for me to say something that might be more favourable." He added, therefore, that Dr. Hill was, notwithstanding, a very curious observer; and if he would have been contented to tell the world no more than he knew, he might have been a very considerable man, and needed not to have recourse to such mean expedients to raise his reputation.

The King then talked of literary journals, mentioned particularly the *Journal des Savans*, and asked Johnson if it was well done. Johnson said it was formerly very well done, and gave some account of the persons who began it, and carried it on for some years; enlarging, at the same time, on the nature and use of such works. The King asked him if it was well done now. Johnson answered, he had no reason to think that it was. The King then asked him if there were any other literary journals published in this kingdom, except the Monthly
and

and Critical Reviews; and on being answered there were no other, his Majesty asked which of them was the best: Johnson answered, that the Monthly Review was done with most care, the Critical upon the best principles; adding, that the authors of the Monthly Review were enemies to the Church. This the King said he was sorry to hear.

The conversation next turned on the Philosophical Transactions, when Johnson observed, that they had now a better method of arranging their materials than formerly. "Aye, (said the King,) they are obliged to Dr. Johnson for that;" for his Majesty had heard and remembered the circumstance, which Johnson himself had forgot.

His Majesty expressed a desire to have the literary biography of this country ably executed, and proposed to Dr. Johnson to undertake it. Johnson signified his readiness to comply with his Majesty's wishes.

During the whole of this interview, Johnson talked to his Majesty with profound respect, but still in his firm manly manner, with a sonorous voice, and never in that subdued tone which is commonly used at the levee and in the drawing-room. After the King withdrew, Johnson shewed himself highly pleased with his Majesty's conversation and gracious behaviour. He said to Mr. Barnard, "Sir, they may talk of the King as they will; but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen." And he afterwards observed to Mr. Langton, "Sir, his manners are those of as fine a gentleman as we may suppose Lewis the Fourteenth or Charles the Second."

At Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where a circle of Johnson's friends was collected round him to hear his account of this memorable conversation, Dr. Joseph Warton, in his frank and lively manner, was
very

very active in pressing him to mention the particulars. "Come now, Sir, this is an interesting matter; do favour us with it." Johnson, with great good humour, complied.

He told them, "I found his Majesty wished I should talk, and I made it my business to talk. I find it does a man good to be talked to by his sovereign. In the first place, a man cannot be in a passion—" Here some question interrupted him, which is to be regretted, as he certainly would have pointed out and illustrated many circumstances of advantage, from being in a situation, where the powers of the mind are at once excited to vigorous exertion, and tempered by reverential awe.

During all the time in which Dr. Johnson was employed in relating to the circle at Sir Joshua Reynolds's the particulars, of what passed between the King and him, Dr. Goldsmith remained unmoved upon a sofa at some distance, affecting not to join in the least in the eager curiosity of the company. He assigned as a reason for his gloom and seeming inattention, that he apprehended Johnson had relinquished his purpose of furnishing him with a prologue to his play, with the hopes of which he had been flattered; but it was strongly suspected that he was fretting with chagrin and envy at the singular honour Dr. Johnson had lately enjoyed. At length, the frankness and simplicity of his natural character prevailed. He sprung from the sofa, advanced to Johnson, and in a kind of flutter, from imagining himself in the situation which he had just been hearing described, exclaimed, "Well, you acquitted yourself in this conversation better than I should have done; for I should have bowed and stammered through the whole of it."

He passed three months at Lichfield this year, where he was engaged in a most solemn and affecting scene.

"Sunday,

" Sunday, Oct. 18, 1767. Yesterday, Oct. 17, at about ten in the morning, I took my leave for ever of my dear old friend, Catherine Chambers, who came to live with my mother about 1724, and has been but little parted from us since. She buried my father, my brother, and my mother. She is now fifty-eight years old.

" I desired all to withdraw, then told her that we were to part for ever ; that as Christians, we should part with prayer ; and that I would, if she was willing, say a short prayer beside her. She expressed great desire to hear me ; and held up her poor hands, as she lay in bed, with great fervour, while I prayed, kneeling by her.

" I then kissed her. She told me, that to part was the greatest pain that she had ever felt, and that she hoped we should meet again in a better place. I expressed, with swelled eyes, and great emotion of tenderness, the same hopes. We kissed, and parted. I humbly hope to meet again, and to part no more."

By those who have been taught to look upon Johnson as a man of a harsh and stern character, let this tender and affectionate scene be candidly read ; and let them then judge whether more warmth of heart, and grateful kindness, is often found in human nature.

It appears from his notes of the state of his mind, that he suffered great perturbation and distraction in 1768. Nothing of his writing was given to the public this year, except the Prologue to his friend Goldsmith's comedy of " The Good-natured Man."

He talked of the heinousness of the crime of adultery, by which the peace of families was destroyed. He said, " Confusion of progeny constitutes the essence of the crime ; and therefore a woman who breaks her marriage vows is much more criminal than a man who does it. A man, to be sure, is criminal

criminal in the sight of God: but he does not do his wife a very material injury, if he does not insult her; if, for instance, from mere wantonness of appetite, he steals privately to her chambermaid. Sir, a wife ought not greatly to resent this. I would not receive home a daughter who had run away from her husband on that account. A wife should study to reclaim her husband by more attention to please him. Sir, a man will not, once in a hundred instances, leave his wife and go to a harlot, if his wife has not been negligent of pleasing."

Being asked if it was not hard that one deviation from chastity should absolutely ruin a young woman—JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir; it is the great principle which she is taught. When she has given up that principle, she has given up every notion of female honour and virtue, which are all included in chastity."

His sincere regard for Francis Barber, his faithful negro servant, made him so desirous of his further improvement, that he now placed him at a school at Bishop Stortford, in Hertfordshire. This humane attention does Johnson's heart much honour.

The late Alexander Earl of Eglintoune, who loved wit more than wine, and men of genius more than sycophants, had a great admiration of Johnson; but from the remarkable elegance of his own manners, was, perhaps, too delicately sensible of the roughness which sometimes appeared in Johnson's behaviour. One evening about this time, when his Lordship did Mr. B. the honour to sup at his lodgings with Dr. Robertson and several other men of literary distinction, he regretted that Johnson had not been educated with more refinement, and lived more in polished society. "No, no, my Lord, (said Signor Baretti,) do with him what you would, he would always have been a bear." "True, (answered

swered the Earl, with a smile,) but he would have been a *dancing bear*."

To obviate all the reflections which have gone round the world to Johnson's prejudice, by applying to him the epithet of a *bear*, let us impress upon our readers a just and happy saying of Goldsmith: "Johnson, to be sure, has a roughness in his manner; but no man alive has a more tender heart. *He has nothing of the bear but his skin.*"

1769. His Majesty having this year instituted the Royal Academy, Johnson had the honour of being appointed Professor of Ancient Literature. In the course of the year he wrote some letters to Mrs. Thrale, and passed some part of the summer at Oxford and at Lichfield.

When Mr. B. once censured a gentleman of his acquaintance for marrying a second time, as it shewed a disregard of his first wife, he said, "Not at all, Sir. On the contrary, were he not to marry again, it might be concluded that his first wife had given him a disgust to marriage; but by taking a second wife he pays the highest compliment to the first, by shewing that she made him so happy as a married man, that he wishes to be so a second time." So ingenious a turn did he give to this delicate question. And yet, on another occasion, he owned that he once had almost asked a promise of Mrs. Johnson that she would not marry again, but had checked himself.

Dr. Johnson honoured Mr. B. with his company at dinner on the 16th of October, at his lodgings in Old Bond-street, with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Bickerstaff, and Mr. Thomas Davies. Garrick played round him with a fond vivacity, taking hold of the breasts of his coat, and looking up in his face with a lively archness, complimented him on the good

health which he seemed then to enjoy; while the sage, shaking his head, beheld him with a gentle complacency. One of the company not being come at the appointed hour, Mr. B. proposed, as usual upon such occasions, to order dinner to be served; adding, "Ought six people to be kept waiting for one?" "Why yes, (answered Johnson, with a delicate humanity,) if the one will suffer more by your sitting down, than the six will do by waiting." Goldsmith, to divert the tedious minutes, strutted about, bragging of his dress. "Come, come, (said Garrick,) talk no more of that. You are, perhaps, the worst—ehh!"—Goldsmith was eagerly attempting to interrupt him, when Garrick went on, laughing ironically, "Nay, you will always *look* like a gentleman; but I am talking of being well or ill *drest*." "Well, let me tell you, (said Goldsmith,) when my taylor brought home my bloom-coloured coat, he said 'Sir, I have a favour to beg of you. When any body asks you who made your clothes, be pleased to mention John Phielby, at the Harrow, in Water-lane.'" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that was because he knew the strange colour would attract crowds to gaze at it, and thus they might hear of him, and see how well he could make a coat even of so absurd a colour."

October 20, 1769, the Doctor appeared, for the only time in his life, as a witness in a Court of Justice, being called to give evidence to the character of Mr. Baretti, who having stabbed a man in the street, was arraigned at the Old Bailey for murder. Never did such a constellation of genius enlighten the awful Sessions House; Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, Mr. Beaucherk, and Dr. Johnson: and undoubtedly their favourable testimony had due weight with the Court and Jury. Johnson gave his evidence in a slow, deliberate, and distinct manner, which
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was uncommonly impressive. It is well known that Mr. Baretti was acquitted.

Mr. B. one day introduced the subject of death, and endeavoured to maintain that the fear of it might be got over. He told the Doctor that Hume said, he was no more uneasy to think he should *not be* after this life, than that he *had not been* before he began to exist. JOHNSON. "Sir, if he really thinks so, his perceptions are disturbed; he is mad: if he does not think so, he lies. He may tell you, he holds his finger in the flame of a candle, without feeling pain; would you believe him? When he dies, he at least gives up all he has." BOSWELL. "Foote, Sir, told me, that when he was very ill he was not afraid to die." JOHNSON. "It is not true, Sir. Hold a pistol to Foote's breast, or to Hume's breast, and threaten to kill them, and you'll see how they behave." BOSWELL. "But may we not fortify our minds for the approach of death?" To this question he answered, in a passion, "No, Sir, let it alone. It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives. The act of dying is not of importance, it lasts so short a time." He added, (with an earnest look,) "A man knows it must be so, and submits. It will do him no good to whine."

Mr. B. attempted to continue the conversation, but the Doctor was so provoked, that he said, "Give us no more of this; and was thrown into such a state of agitation, that he expressed himself in a way that alarmed and distressed Mr. B. he shewed an impatience to be alone, and when Mr. B. was going away, called to him sternly, "Don't let us meet to-morrow."

In 1770 he published a political pamphlet, entitled "The False Alarm," intended to justify the conduct of ministry and their majority in the House of Commons, for having virtually assumed it as an axiom,

that the expulsion of a Member of Parliament was equivalent to exclusion, and thus having declared Colonel Lutterel to be duly elected for the county of Middlesex, notwithstanding Mr. Wilkes had a great majority of votes. This being justly considered as a gross violation of the right of election, an alarm for the constitution extended itself all over the kingdom. To prove this alarm to be false, was the purpose of Johnson's pamphlet; but even his vast powers were inadequate to cope with constitutional truth and reason, and his argument failed of effect; and the House of Commons have since expunged the offensive resolution from their Journals.

During this year there was a total cessation of all correspondence between Dr. Johnson and Mr. B. without any coldness on either side, but merely from procrastination, continued from day to day.

In 1771 he published another political pamphlet, entitled "Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands," in which, upon materials furnished to him by ministry, and upon general topics expanded in his richest style, he successfully endeavoured to persuade the nation that it was wise and laudable to suffer the question of right to remain undecided, rather than involve our country in another war. His description of the miseries of war in this pamphlet, is one of the finest pieces of eloquence in the English language. Upon this occasion, we find Johnson lashing the party in opposition with unbounded severity, and making the fullest use of what he ever reckoned a most effectual argumentative instrument, contempt. His character of their very able mysterious champion, JUNIUS, is executed with all the force of his genius, and finished with the highest care. He seems to have exulted in sallying forth to single combat against the boasted and formidable

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able hero, who bade defiance to "principalities and powers, and the rulers of this world."

Mr. Strahan, the printer, who had been long in intimacy with Johnson, in the course of his literary labours, who was at once his friendly agent in receiving his pension for him, and his banker in supplying him with money when he wanted it; who was himself now a Member of Parliament, and who loved much to be employed in political negotiation; thought he should do eminent service, both to government and Johnson, if he could be the means of his getting a seat in the House of Commons. With this view, he wrote a letter to one of the Secretaries of the Treasury, but the measure failed of success.

In 1771, Mr. B. gave the Doctor an account of his comfortable life as a married man, and a lawyer in practice at the Scotch bar; invited him to Scotland, and promised to attend him to the Highlands, and Hebrides.

In 1773 his only publication was an edition of his folio Dictionary, with additions and corrections; nor did he, so far as is known, furnish any productions of his fertile pen to any of his numerous friends or dependants, except the Preface to his old amanuensis Macbean's "Dictionary of ancient Geography." His Shakspeare, indeed, which had been received with high approbation by the public, and gone through several editions, was this year re-published by George Steevens, Esq. a gentleman not only deeply skilled in ancient learning, and of very extensive reading in English literature, especially the early writers, but at the same time of acute discernment and elegant taste.

On Thursday, April 29, 1773, Mr. B. dined with Johnson at General Oglethorpe's, where were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Langton, Dr. Goldsmith, and Mr. Thrale. Mr. B. was very desirous

to get Dr. Johnson absolutely fixed in his resolution to go with him to the Hebrides this year.

The custom of eating dogs at Otaheite being mentioned, Goldsmith observed, that this was also a custom in China; that a dog-butcher is as common there as any other butcher; and that when he walks abroad all the dogs fall on him. JOHNSON. "That is not owing to his killing dogs, Sir. I remember a butcher at Lichfield, whom a dog that was in the house where I lived, always attacked. It is the smell of carnage which provokes this, let the animals he has killed be what they may." GOLDSMITH. "Yes, there is a general abhorrence in animals at the signs of massacre. If you put a tub full of blood into a stable, the horses are like to go mad." JOHNSON. "I doubt that." GOLDSMITH. "Nay, Sir, it is a fact well authenticated."

On Friday, May 7, this year, Mr. B. breakfasted with him at Mr. Thrall's in the Borough. While alone, Mr. B. endeavoured to apologise for a lady who had been divorced from her husband by act of parliament. He said, that her husband had used her very ill, had behaved brutally to her, and that she could not continue to live with him without having her delicacy contaminated; that all affection for him was thus destroyed; that the essence of conjugal union being gone, there remained only a cold form, a mere civil obligation; that she was in the prime of life, with qualities to produce happiness; that these ought not to be lost; and, that the gentleman on whose account she was divorced had gained her heart while thus unhappily situated. When he had finished his harangue, the Doctor gave him a proper check: "My dear Sir, never accustom your mind to mingle virtue and vice. The woman's a whore, and there's an end on't."

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The Doctor's stay in Scotland was from the 18th of August, 1773, the day on which he arrived there, till the 22d of November, when he set out on his return to London; and ninety-four days were never passed by any man in a more vigorous exertion.

He came by the way of Berwick upon Tweed to Edinburgh, where he remained a few days, and then went by St. Andrew's, Aberdeen, Inverness, and Fort Augustus, to the Hebrides, to visit which was the principal object he had in view. He visited the isles of Sky, Raſay, Col, Mull, Inchkenneth, and Icolmkill. He travelled through Argyleſhire by Inveraray, and from thence by Lochlomond and Dunbarton to Glasgow, then by Loudon to Auchinleck in Ayrſhire, and then by Hamilton, back to Edinburgh, where he again ſpent ſome time. He thus ſaw the four Universities of Scotland, its three principal cities, and as much of the Highland and iſular life as was ſufficient for his philoſophical contemplation. He was reſpectfully entertained by the great, the learned, and the elegant, wherever he went; nor was he leſs delighted with the hoſpitality which he experienced in humbler life.

During his ſtay at Edinburgh, after his return from the Hebrides, he was at great pains to obtain information concerning Scotland; and it appears from his ſubſequent letters, that he was not leſs ſollicitous for intelligence on this ſubject after his return to London.

His humane forgiving diſpoſition was put to a pretty ſtrong teſt on his return to London, by a liberty which Mr. Thomas Davies had taken with him in his abſence, which was, to publiſh two volumes, entitled, "Miscellaneous and fugitive Pieces," which he advertised in the newspapers, "By the Author of the Rambler." In this collection, ſeveral of Dr. Johnson's acknowledged writings,

writings, and several of his anonymous performances, and some which he had written for others, were inserted; but there were also some in which he had no concern whatever. He was at first very angry, as he had good reason to be. But, upon consideration of his poor friend's narrow circumstances, and that he had only a little profit in view, and meant no harm, he soon relented, and continued his kindness to him as formerly.

In the course of his self-examination with retrospect to this year, he seems to have been much dejected; for he says, January 1, 1774, "This year has past with so little improvement, that I doubt whether I have not rather impaired than increased my learning."

1774. He was now seriously engaged in writing an account of his travels in the Hebrides.

The first effort of his pen in 1775, was, "Proposals for publishing the Works of Mrs. Charlotte Lennox," in three volumes quarto. In his diary, January 2, is this entry: "Wrote Charlotte's Proposals."

As a proof that Dr. Johnson possessed great personal courage, Mr. B. gives the following instances.

One day, at Mr. Beauclerk's house in the country, when two large dogs were fighting, he went up to them, and beat them till they separated; and at another time, when told of the danger there was that a gun might burst if charged with many balls, he put in six or seven, and fired it off against a wall. Mr. Langton when swimming with the Doctor near Oxford, cautioned him against a pool, which was reckoned particularly dangerous; upon which Johnson directly swam into it. One night he was attacked in the street by four men, to whom he would not yield, but kept them all at bay, till the watch came up, and carried both him and them to the round-house. In the play-house at Lichfield, Johnson

son having for a moment quitted a chair which was placed for him between the side-scenes, a gentleman took possession of it, and when Johnson on his return civilly demanded his seat, rudely refused to give it up; upon which Johnson laid hold of him, and tossed him and the chair into the pit. Foote, who so successfully revived the old comedy, by exhibiting living characters, had resolved to imitate Johnson on the stage, expecting great profits from his ridicule of so celebrated a man. Johnson being informed of his intention, and being at dinner at Mr. Thomas Davies's the bookseller, he asked Mr. Davies "what was the common price of an oak stick;" and being answered six-pence, "Why then, Sir, (said he,) give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity; for I am told Foote means to *take me off*, as he calls it, and I am determined the fellow shall not do it with impunity." Davies took care to acquaint Foote of this, which effectually checked the wantonness of the mimic. Mr. Macpherson's menaces made Johnson provide himself with the same implement of defence; and had he been attacked, he would have made his corporal prowess be felt as much as his intellectual.

His "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland," is a most valuable performance. It abounds in extensive philosophical views of society, and in ingenious sentiments and lively description. A considerable part of it, indeed, consists of speculations, which many years before he saw the wild regions which we visited together, probably had employed his attention, though the actual sight of those scenes undoubtedly quickened and augmented them. Mr. Orme, the very able historian, agreed with Mr. B. in this opinion, which he thus strongly expressed:—"There are in that book thoughts, which, by long revolution,

revolution in the great mind of Johnson, have been formed and polished like pebbles rolled in the ocean!"

In 1775 he published a pamphlet, entitled, "Taxation no Tyranny; an answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress."

He had long before indulged most unfavourable sentiments of our fellow subjects in America. For, as early as 1769, he had said of them, "They are a race of convicts, and ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging."

That this pamphlet was written at the desire of those who were then in power, there is no doubt; and, indeed, he owned that it had been revised and curtailed by some of them. He told Mr. B. that they had struck out one passage, which was to this effect: "That the Colonists could with no solidity argue from their not having been taxed while in their infancy, that they should not now be taxed. We do not put a calf into the plow; we wait till he is an ox." He said, "They struck it out either critically, as too ludicrous, or politically, as too exasperating. I care not which. It was their business. If an architect says, I will build five stories, and the man who employs him says, I will have only three, the employer is to decide."

His pamphlets in support of the measures of administration were published on his own account, and he afterwards collected them into a volume, with the title of "Political Tracts, by the Author of the Rambler."

He complained to a Right Honourable friend of distinguished talents and very elegant manners, with whom he maintained a long intimacy, that his pension having been given to him as a literary character, he had been applied to by administration to write political pamphlets; and he was even so much irritated, that he declared his resolution to resign his pension. His friend shewed him the impropriety of such

such a measure, and he afterwards expressed his gratitude, and said he had received good advice. To that friend he once signified a wish to have his pension secured to him for his life; but he neither asked nor received from government any reward whatsoever for his political labours.

Mr. B. talked to him of the cheerfulness of Fleet-street, owing to the constant quick succession of people which pass through it. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, Fleet-street has a very animated appearance; but I think the full tide of human existence is at Charing-cross."

Mr. B. passed many hours with him on the 17th of May, 1775, of which all his memorial is, "much laughing." It would seem he had that day been in a humour for jocularities and merriment, and upon such occasions Mr. B. never knew a man laugh more heartily. The high relish of a state so different from his habitual gloom, produced more than ordinary exertions of that distinguishing faculty of man, which has puzzled philosophers so much to explain. Johnson's laugh was as remarkable as any circumstance in his manner. It was a kind of good humoured growl. Tom Davies described it drolly enough: "He laughs like a rhinoceros."

Sept. 15, 1775, he set out on a tour to France with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. This was the only time in his life that he went upon the Continent.

"Paris is, indeed, (says he in a letter to Mr. B.) a place very different from the Hebrides, but it is to a hasty traveller not so fertile of novelty, nor affords so many opportunities of remark. I cannot pretend to tell the public any thing of a place better known to many of my readers than to myself."

It is to be regretted, that he did not write an account of his travels in France; for as he is reported to have once said, that "he could write the Life of a Broomstick,"

Broomstick," so, notwithstanding so many former travellers have exhausted almost every thing subject for remark in that great kingdom, his very accurate observation, and peculiar vigour of thought and illustration, would have produced a valuable work. During his visit to it, which lasted but about two months, he wrote notes or minutes of what he saw.

"Here," says Mr. Boswell, "let me not forget a curious anecdote, as related to me by Mr. Beauclerk, which I shall endeavour to exhibit as well as I can in that gentleman's lively manner; and in justice to him it is proper to add, that Dr. Johnson told me, I might rely both on the correctness of his memory, and the fidelity of his narrative. "When Madame de Boufflers was first in England, (said Beauclerk,) she was desirous to see Johnson. I accordingly went with her to his chambers in the Temple, where she was entertained with his conversation for some time. When our visit was over, she and I left him, and were got into Inner Temple-lane, when all at once I heard a noise like thunder. This was occasioned by Johnson, who it seems upon a little recollection, had taken it into his head that he ought to have done the honours of his literary residence to a foreign lady of quality, and eager to shew himself a man of gallantry, was hurrying down the stair-case in violent agitation. He overtook us before we reached the Temple-gate, and brushing in between me and Madame de Boufflers, seized her hand, and conducted her to her coach. His dress was a rusty brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes by way of slippers, a little shrivelled wig sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches hanging loose. A considerable crowd of people gathered round, and were not a little struck by this singular appearance."

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In 1776, Dr. Johnson and Mr. Boswell took a trip to Oxford, where the Doctor visited, with much satisfaction, many of his learned acquaintances. From Oxford they went to Birmingham; and returned to London by the way of Litchfield.

On Monday, April 29, 1776, he and Mr. B. made an excursion to Bristol, where Mr. B. was entertained with seeing him inquire upon the spot into the authenticity of "*Rowley's Poetry*." George Catcot, the pewterer, who was as zealous for Rowley, as Dr. Hugh Blair was for Ossian, attended them at their inn, and with a triumphant air of lively simplicity called out, "I'll make Dr. Johnson a convert." Dr. Johnson, at his desire, read aloud some of Chatterton's fabricated verses, while Catcot stood at the back of his chair, moving himself like a pendulum, and beating time with his feet, and now and then looking into Dr. Johnson's face, wondering that he was not yet convinced. Dr. Johnson and Mr. B. called on Mr. Barret, the surgeon, and saw some of the originals as they were called, which were executed very artificially; but from a careful inspection of them, and a consideration of the circumstances with which they were attended, they were quite satisfied of the imposture, which, indeed, has been clearly demonstrated from internal evidence, by Mr. Tyrwhitt, Mr. Warton, and Mr. Malone.

That Johnson was occasionally remarkable for violence of temper, may be granted: but let us ascertain the degree, and not let it be supposed that he was in a perpetual rage, and never without a club in his hand, to knock down every one who approached him. On the contrary, the truth is, that by much the greatest part of his time he

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was civil, obliging, nay polite, in the true sense of the word ; so much so, that many gentlemen who were long acquainted with him, never received, or even heard a severe expression from him.

It was this year, 1776, that an Epitaph, which Dr. Johnson had written for the monument of Dr. Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey, gave occasion to a remonstrance to the Monarch of Literature.

THE EPITAPH.

OLIVARIi GOLDSMITH,
Poetæ, Physici, Historici,
Qui nullum ferè scribendi genus
Non tetigit,
Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit :
Sive risus essent movendi,
Sive lacrymæ,
Affectuum potens at lenis dominator :
Ingenio sublimis, vividus, versatilis,
Oratione grandis, nitidus, venustus :
Hoc monumento memoriam coluit
Sodalium amor,
Amicorum fides,
Lectorum veneratio.
Natus in Hiberniâ Forniz Longfordienfis
In loco cui nomen Pallas,
Nov. XXIX. MDCCXXXI ;
Eblanzæ literis institutus ;
Obiit Londini,
April IV. MDCC LXXXIV.

Sir William Forbes, who gave Mr. B. an account of this circumstance, writes to him thus—"I enclose the Round Robin. This *jeu d'esprit* took its rise one day at dinner at our friend Sir Joshua Reynolds's. All the company present, except myself, were friends and acquaintance

tance of Dr. Goldsmith. The Epitaph, written for him by Dr. Johnson, became the subject of conversation, and various emendations were suggested, which it was agreed should be submitted to the Doctor's consideration.—But the question was, who should have the courage to propose them to him? At last it was hinted, that there could be no way so good as that of a Round Robin, as the sailors call it, which they make use of when they enter into a conspiracy, so as not to let it be known who puts his name first or last to the paper. This proposition was instantly assented to; and Dr. Barnard, Dean of Derry, now Bishop of Killaloe, drew up an address to Dr. Johnson on the occasion, replete with wit and humour, but which it was feared the Doctor might think treated the subject with too much levity. Mr. Burke then proposed the address as it stands in the paper in writing; for a copy of which, see the latter part of this Abridgment.

“ Sir Joshua agreed to carry it to Dr. Johnson, who received it with much good humour, and desired Sir Joshua to tell the gentlemen, that he would alter the Epitaph in any manner they pleased, as to the sense of it; but *he would never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey, with an English inscription.*

Mr. Boswell, in 1776, by an ingenious manœuvre, contrived that Dr. Johnson should meet Mr. Wilkes, to dine at the house of a bookseller. He describes the Doctor's behaviour to be at first very morose to Wilkes; who, notwithstanding, paid him so many little attentions, that the Doctor, at length, softened into complacency, and freely joined him in conversation: and when he returned home, he observed to Mrs. Williams,

who acted for him as housekeeper, that he had spent a very agreeable day.

In 1777, it appears from his "Prayers and Meditations," that Johnson suffered much from a state of mind "unsettled and perplexed," and from that constitutional gloom, which, together with his extreme humility and anxiety with regard to his religious state, made him contemplate himself through too dark and unfavourable a medium. It may be said of him, that he "saw God in clouds." Certain we may be of his injustice to himself in the following lamentable paragraph, which it is painful to think came from the contrite heart of this great man, to whose labours the world is so much indebted: "When I survey my past life, I discover nothing but a barren waste of time, with some disorders of body, and disturbances of the mind very near to madness, which I hope He that made me will suffer to extenuate many faults, and excuse many deficiencies." But we find his devotions in this year eminently fervent, and we are comforted by observing intervals of quiet, composure, and gladness.

On Easter-day we find the following emphatic prayer: "Almighty and most merciful Father, who seest all our miseries, and knowest all our necessities, look down upon me, and pity me. Defend me from the violent incursion of evil thoughts, and enable me to form and keep such resolutions as may conduce to the discharge of the duties which thy providence shall appoint me; and so help me, by thy Holy Spirit, that my heart may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, and that I may serve Thee with pure affection and a cheerful mind. Have mercy upon me, O God have mercy upon me; years and

and infirmities oppress me, terror and anxiety beset me. Have mercy upon me my Creator and my Judge. In all perplexities relieve and free me; and so help me by thy Holy Spirit, that I may now so commemorate the death of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, as that when this short and painful life shall have an end, I may, for his sake, be received to everlasting happiness. Amen ”

Mr. Steevens, whose generosity is well known, joined Dr. Johnson in kind assistance to a female relation of Dr. Goldsmith, and desired that on her return to Ireland she would procure authentic particulars of the life of her celebrated relation.

In the following extract of a letter from the late Mr. Edward Dilly, to Mr. Boswell, will be seen the motive which produced Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*.

“ The edition of the Poets, now printing, will do honour to the English press, and a concise account of the life of each author, by Dr. Johnson, will be a very valuable addition, and stamp the reputation of this edition superior to any thing that is gone before. The first cause that gave rise to this undertaking, I believe was owing to the little trifling edition of the Poets, printing by the Martins at Edinburgh, and to be sold by Bell, in London. Upon examining the volumes which were printed, the type was found so extremely small, that many persons could not read them; not only this inconvenience attended it, but the inaccuracy of the press was very conspicuous. These reasons as well as the idea of an invasion of what we call our Literary Property, induced the London Booksellers to print an ele-

gant and accurate edition of all the English Poets of reputation, from Chaucer to the present time.

“ Accordingly, a select number of the most respectable booksellers met on the occasion, and, on consulting together, agreed that all the proprietors of copy-right in the various Poets should be summoned together; and when their opinions were given, to proceed immediately on the business. Accordingly a meeting was held, consisting of about forty of the most respectable booksellers of London, when it was agreed that an elegant and uniform edition of ‘The English Poets’ should be immediately printed, with a concise account of the life of each author, by Dr. Samuel Johnson; and that three persons should be deputed to wait upon Dr. Johnson, to solicit him to undertake the Lives, *viz* T. Davies, Strahan, and Cadell. The Doctor very politely undertook it, and seemed exceedingly pleased with the proposal. As to the terms, it was left entirely to the Doctor to name his own: he mentioned two hundred guineas: it was immediately agreed to; and a farther compliment, I believe, will be made him. A committee was likewise appointed to engage the best engravers, *viz*. Bartolozzi, Sherwin, Hall, &c. Likewise another committee for giving directions about the paper, printing, &c. so that the whole will be conducted with spirit, and in the best manner, with respect to authorship, editorship, engravings, &c. &c. My brother will give you a list of the Poets we mean to give, many of which are within the time of the Act of Queen Anne, which Martin and Bell cannot give, as they have no property in them; the proprietors are almost all the booksellers in London of consequence.”

A circumstance which could not fail of being
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very pleasing to Johnson, occurred this year, 1777. The Tragedy of "Sir Thomas Overbury," written by his early companion in London, Richard Savage, was brought out with alterations at Drury lane theatre. The Prologue to it was written by Mr. Richard Brindsley Sheridan; in which, after describing very pathetically the wretchedness of

Ill fated Savage, at whose birth was giv'n
No parent but the Muse, no friend but Heav'n;

he concluded with an elegant compliment to Johnson on his Dictionary, that wonderful performance which cannot be too often or too highly praised; of which Mr. Harris, in his "Philological Inquiries," justly and liberally observes, "Such is its merit, that our language does not possess a more copious, learned, and valuable work." The concluding lines of this Prologue were these:

So pleads the tale that gives to future times
The son's misfortunes, and the parent's crimes;
There shall his fame (if own'd tonight) survive,
Fix'd by the hand that bids our language live.

Dr. Johnson, at an interview with Mr. Boswell at Ashbourne, in 1777, put into his hands the whole series of his writings upon the melancholy occasion of Dr. Dodd's condemnation. In the first place he wrote Dr. Dodd's "Speech to the Recorder of London," at the Old Bailey, when sentence of death was about to be pronounced upon him.

He wrote also "The Convict's Address to his unhappy

unhappy Brethren," a sermon delivered by Dr. Dodd, in the chapel of Newgate.

The notes are entirely Dodd's own, and Johnson's writing ends at the words, "the thief whom he pardoned on the cross." What follows was supplied by Dr. Dodd himself.

The other pieces written by Johnson are two letters, one to the Lord Chancellor Bathurst, (not Lord North, as is erroneously supposed) and one to Lord Mansfield;—A Petition from Dr. Dodd to the King;—A Petition from Mrs. Dodd to the Queen;—Observations of some length inserted in the newspapers, on occasion of Earl Percy's having presented to his Majesty a petition for mercy to Dodd, signed by twenty thousand people, but all in vain. He had also written a petition from the city of London; "but (said he to Mr. B. with a significant smile) they *mended* it!"

The last of these articles which Johnson wrote is "Dr. Dodd's last solemn Declaration," which he left with the sheriff, at the place of execution.

On Sunday, June 22, 1777, Dr. Dodd writes, begging Dr. Johnson's assistance in framing a supplicatory letter to his Majesty:

"If his Majesty could be moved of his royal clemency to spare me and my family the horrors and ignominy of a publick death, which the publick itself is solicitous to wave, and to grant me in some silent distant corner of the globe, to pass the remainder of my days in penitence and prayer, I would bless his clemency and be humbled.

This letter was brought to Dr. Johnson when in church. He stooped down and read it, and wrote, when he went home, the following letter for Dr. Dodd to the King:

"Sir,

" SIR,

" May it not offend your Majesty, that the most miserable of men applies himself to your clemency, as his last hope and his last refuge; that your mercy is most earnestly and humbly implored by a clergyman, whom your laws and judges have condemned to the horror and ignominy of a publick execution.

I confess the crime, and own the enormity of its consequences, and the danger of its example. Nor have I the confidence to petition for impunity; but humbly hope, that publick security may be established without the spectacle of a clergyman dragged through the streets, to a death of infamy, amidst the derision of the profligate and profane; and that justice may be satisfied with irrevocable exile, perpetual disgrace, and hopeless penury.

My life, Sir, has not been useless to mankind. I have benefited many. But my offences against God are numberless, and I have had little time for repentance. Preserve me, Sir, by your prerogative of mercy, from the necessity of appearing unprepared at that tribunal before which Kings and Subjects must stand at last together. Permit me to hide my guilt in some obscure corner of a foreign country, where, if I can ever attain confidence to hope that my prayers will be heard, they shall be poured with all the fervour of gratitude for the life and happiness of your Majesty.

I am, Sir,

Your Majesty's, &c."

All applications for the Royal Mercy having failed, Dr. Dodd prepared himself for death; and, with a warmth of gratitude, wrote to Dr. Johnson as follows:

" June

June 25, Midnight.

ACCEPT, thou *great* and *good* heart, my earnest and fervent thanks and prayers for all thy benevolent and kind efforts in my behalf.—Oh! Dr. Johnson! as I fought your knowledge at an early hour in life, would to heaven I had cultivated the love and acquaintance of so excellent a man! I pray God most sincerely to bless you with the highest transports—the infelt satisfaction of *humane* and benevolent exertions!—And admitted, as I trust I shall be, to the realms of bliss before you, I shall hail your arrival there with transport, and rejoice to acknowledge that you was my comforter, my advocate, and my *Friend*. God *be ever with you!*

Dr. Johnson lastly wrote to Dr. Dodd this solemn and soothing letter:

To the Reverend Dr. Dodd.

“DEAR SIR,

“THAT which is appointed to all men is now coming upon you. Outward circumstances, the eyes and the thoughts of men, are below the notice of an immortal being about to stand the trial for eternity, before the Supreme Judge of heaven and earth. Be comforted: your crime, morally or religiously considered, has no very deep dye of turpitude. It corrupted no man's principles, it attacked no man's life. It involved only a temporary and reparable injury. Of this, and of all other sins, you are earnestly to repent; and may God, who knoweth our frailty and desireth not our death, accept your repentance, for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

In

In requital of those well-intended offices which you are pleased so emphatically to acknowledge, let me beg that you make in your devotions one petition for my eternal welfare. I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate servant,

June 26, 1777.

SAM. JOHNSON."

Under the copy of this letter Mr. B. found written, in Johnson's own hand, "Next day, June 27, he was executed."

To conclude this interesting episode with an useful application, let us now attend to the reflections of Johnson at the end of the "Occasional Papers," concerning the unfortunate Dr. Dodd. "Such were the last thoughts of a man whom we have seen exulting in popularity, and sunk in shame. For his reputation, which no man can give to himself, those who conferred it are to answer. Of his publick ministry the means of judging were sufficiently attainable. He must be allowed to preach well, whose sermons strike his audience with forcible conviction. Of his life, those who thought it consistent with his doctrine, did not originally form false notions. He was at first what he endeavoured to make others; but the world broke down his resolution, and he in time ceased to exemplify his own instructions.

Let those who are tempted to his faults, tremble at his punishment; and those whom he impressed from the pulpit with religious sentiments, endeavour to confirm them by considering the regret and self-abhorrence with which he reviewed in prison his deviations from rectitude.

When some of Dr. Dodd's pious friends were trying to console him by saying that he was going to leave "a wretched world," he had honesty enough not to join in the cant:—"No, no,

no, (said he,) it has been a very agreeable world to me." Johnson on hearing this said, "I respect Dodd for thus speaking the truth; for, to be sure, he had for several years enjoyed a life of great voluptuousness."

Dodd's city friends stood by him so, that a thousand pounds were ready to be given to the gaoler, if he would let him escape. Dr. Johnson knew a friend of Dodd's who walked about Newgate for some time on the evening before the day of his execution, with five hundred pounds in his pocket, ready to be paid to any of the turnkeys who could get him out: but it was too late; for he was watched with much circumspection. He said Dodd's friends had an image of him made of wax, which was to have been left in his place; and he believed it was carried into the prison.

Mr. B. wishing to be satisfied what degree of truth there was in a story which a friend of Johnson's and his had told to his disadvantage, Mr. B. mentioned it to him in direct terms; and it was to this effect; That a gentleman who had lived in great intimacy with him, shewn him much kindness, and even relieved him from a spunging house, having afterwards fallen into bad circumstances, was one day, when Johnson was at dinner with him, seized for debt, and carried to prison; that Johnson sat still undisturbed, and went on eating and drinking; upon which the gentleman's sister who was present, could not suppress her indignation: "What, Sir, (said she,) are you so unfeeling, as not even to offer to go to my brother in his distress; you who have been so much obliged to him?" And that Johnson answered, "Madam, I owe him no obligation; what he did for me he would have done for a dog."

Johnson

Johnson assured Mr. B. that the story was absolutely false; but like a man conscious of being in the right, and desirous of completely vindicating himself from such a charge, he did not arrogantly rest on a mere denial, and on his general character, but proceeded thus to Mr. B.—“Sir, I was very intimate with that gentleman, and was once relieved by him from an arrest; but I never was present when he was arrested, never knew that he was arrested, and I believe he never was in difficulties after the time when he relieved me. I loved him much; yet in talking of his general character, I may have said, though I do not remember that I ever did so, that as his generosity proceeded from no principle, but was a part of his profusion, he would do for a dog what he would do for a friend: but I never applied this remark to any particular instance, and certainly not to his kindness to me. If a profuse man, who does not value his money, and gives a large sum to a whore, gives half as much, or an equally large sum to relieve a friend, it cannot be esteemed as virtue. This was all that I could say of that gentleman; and, if said at all, it must have been said after his death. Sir, I would have gone to the world's end to relieve him. The remark about the dog, if made by me, was such a fally as might escape one when painting a man highly.”

In 1778, Johnson gave the world a luminous proof that the vigour of his mind in all its faculties, whether memory, judgment or imagination, was not in the least abated; for this year came out the first four volumes of his “Prefaces, biographical and critical, to the most eminent of the English Poets,” published by the booksellers of London. The remaining volumes came

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out in the year 1780. The Poets were selected by the several booksellers who had the honorary copy-right, which is still preserved among them by mutual compact, notwithstanding the decision of the House of Lords against the perpetuity of Literary Property. We have his own authority, that by his recommendation the poems of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden, were added to the collection.

On Friday, March 20, Mr. B. found him at his own house, sitting with Mrs. Williams, and was informed that the room formerly allotted to him was now appropriated to a charitable purpose; Mrs. Desmoulins*, her daughter, and a Miss Carmichael, being all lodged in it. Such was his humanity, and such his generosity, that Mrs. Desmoulins herself told Mr. B. he allowed her half a guinea a week. Let it be remembered, that this was above a twelfth part of his pension.

His liberality, indeed, was at all periods of his life very remarkable. Mr. Howard of Litchfield, at whose father's house Johnson had in his early years been kindly received, told Mr. B. that when he was a boy at the Charter-House, his father wrote to him to go and pay a visit to Mr. Samuel Johnson, which he accordingly did, and found him in an upper room, of poor appearance. Johnson received him with much courteousness, and talked a great deal to him, as to a school-boy, of the course of his education, and other particulars. When he afterwards came to know and understand the high character of this great man, he recollected his condescension with wonder. He added, that when he was going away, Mr. Johnson presented him with half a guinea; and

* Daughter of Dr. Swinfen, Johnson's godfather, and widow of Mr. Desmoulins, a writing-master.

this,

this, said Mr. Howard, was at a time when he probably had not another.

Tom Davies had now unfortunately failed in his circumstances, and was much indebted to Dr. Johnson's kindness for obtaining for him many alleviations of his distress. Johnson blamed his folly in quitting the stage, by which he and his wife got five hundred pounds a year. Mr. B. told the Doctor he believed it was owing to Churchill's attack upon him;

He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone.

Johnson replied, "I believe so too, Sir. But what a man is he who is to be driven from the stage by a line? Another line would have driven him from his shop."

Mr. Thomas Davies was soon to have a benefit, at Drury-lane theatre, as some relief to his unfortunate circumstances. Dr. Johnson, Mr. Boswell, and their friends, were all warmly interested for his success, and had contributed towards it. However, they thought there was no harm in having a joke when he could not be hurt by it. Mr. B. proposed that he should be brought on to speak a Prologue upon the occasion; and began to mutter fragments of what it might be: as, that when now grown *old*, he was obliged to cry, "Poor Tom's *a-cold*;—that he owned he had been driven from the stage by a Churchill, but that this was no disgrace, for a Churchill had beat the French;—that he had been satyrised as "mouthing a sentence as curs mouth a bone," but he was now glad of a bone to pick.—"Nay, (said Johnson,) I would have him to say,

Mad Tom is come to see the world again.

Goldsmith being mentioned one day, Johnson observed that it was long before his merit came to be acknowledged. That he once complained to him, in ludicrous terms of distress, "Whenever I write any thing, the publick make a point to know nothing about it:" but that his "Traveller" brought him into high reputation.

Johnson (now in his seventieth year) said, "It is a man's own fault, it is from want of use, if his mind grows torpid in old age."

This season, 1778, there was a whimsical fashion in the newspapers of applying Shakspeare's words to describe living people well known in the world; which was done under the title of "*Modern Characters from Shakspear*;" many of which were admirably adapted. The fancy took so much, that they were afterwards collected into a pamphlet. Somebody said to Johnson, that he had not been in those characters. "Yes (said he) I have. I should have been sorry to be left out." He then repeated what had been applied to him,

I must borrow GARAGANTUA's mouth.

On Sunday April 12, 1778, Mr. B. found him at home before dinner; Dr. Dodd's poem entitled "Thoughts in Prison," was lying upon his table. Mr. B. was desirous to hear Johnson's opinion of it: to Mr. B.'s surprize, he told him he had not read a line of it. Mr. B. took up the book and read a passage to him. Johnson. "Pretty well, if you are previously disposed to like them." Mr. B. read another passage with which he was better pleased. He then took the book into his own hands, and having looked at the prayer at the end of it, he said, "What evidence is there that this was composed the night before

before he suffered. "I do not believe it." He then read aloud where he prays for the King, &c. and observed, "Sir, do you think that a man the night before he is to be hanged cares for the succession of a royal family? Though he may have composed this prayer then. A man who has been canting all his life may cant to the last. And yet a man who has been refused a pardon after so much petitioning, would hardly be praying thus fervently for the King."

Johnson had a noble ambition floating in his mind, and had undoubtedly, often speculated on the possibility of his super-eminent powers being rewarded in this great and liberal country by the highest honours of the state. Sir William Scott, upon the death of the late Lord Litchfield, who was Chancellor of the University of Oxford, said to Johnson, "What a pity it is, Sir, that you did not follow the profession of the law! You might have been Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, and attained to the dignity of the peerage; and now that the title of Litchfield, your native city, is extinct, you might have had it." Johnson upon this, seemed much agitated; and, in an angry tone, exclaimed, "Why will you vex me by suggesting this, when it is too late?"

But he did not repine at the prosperity of others. The late Dr. Thomas Leland told Mr. Courtenay, that when Mr. Edmund Burke shewed Johnson his fine house and lands near Beaconsfield, Johnson coolly said, "*Non equidem invideo; miror magis.*"

This year, 1778, the Reverend Mr. Horne published his "Letter to Mr. Dunning, on the English Particle;" Johnson read it, and though not treated in it with sufficient respect, he had candour enough to say to Mr. Seward, "Were

I to make a new edition of my Dictionary, I would adopt several of Mr. Horne's etymologies; I hope they did not put the dog in the pillory for his libel, he has too much literature for that."

In the summer of the year 1778, Dr. Johnson went down to the Camp at Warley, and he staid there about a week: the scene appeared, notwithstanding a great degree of ill health that he seemed to labour under, to interest and amuse him. He sat, with a patient degree of attention, to observe the proceedings of a regimental court-martial, that happened to be called in the time of his stay, and one night as late as at eleven o'clock, he accompanied the Major of the regiment in going what are styled the Rounds, where he might observe the forms of visiting the guards, for the seeing that they and their sentries are ready in their duty on their several posts. He took occasion to converse at times on military topicks.

On one occasion when the regiment were going through their exercise, he went quite close to the men, at one of the extremities of it, and watched all their practices attentively; and when he came away, his remark was, 'The men indeed do load their musquets and fire with wonderful celerity.' He was likewise particular in requiring to know what was the weight of the musquet balls in use, and within what distance they might be expected to take effect when fired off.

In walking among the tents, and observing the difference between those of the officers and private men, he said that the superiority of accommodation of the better conditions of life, to that of the inferior ones, was never exhibited to him in so distinct a view. The civilities paid to him in the camp were, from the gentlemen of the Lincolnshire regiment, one of the officers of which

which accommodated him with a tent in which he slept; and from General Hall, who very courteously invited him to dine with him, where he appeared to be very well pleased with his entertainment, and the civilities he received on the part of the General; the attention likewise of the General's aid-de camp, Captain Smith, seemed to be very welcome to him, as appeared by their engaging in a great deal of discourse together. The Gentlemen of the East York regiment likewise on being informed of his coming, solicited his company at dinner, but by that time he had fixed his departure, so that he could not comply with the invitation.

In 1779, Dr. Johnson proceeded at intervals, in writing his "Lives of the Poets."

The Doctor sometimes employed himself in chymistry, sometimes in watering and pruning a vine, and sometimes in small experiments, at which those who may smile, should recollect that there are moments which admit of being soothed only by trifles.

In 1780 the world was kept in impatience for the completion of his "Lives of the Poets," upon which he was employed so far as his indolence allowed him to labour.

In May this year, Mr. Boswell, then at Edinburgh, received the following letter from Mr. Langton.

"The melancholy information you have received concerning Mr. Beauclerk's death is true. Had his talents been directed in any sufficient degree as they ought, I have always been strongly of opinion, that they were calculated to make an illustrious figure; and that opinion as it had been in part formed by Dr. Johnson's judgment, receives more and more confirmation by hearing, what,

what, since his death, Dr. Johnson has said concerning them; a few evenings ago, he was at Mr. Vesey's, where Lord Althorpe, who was one of a numerous company there, addressed Dr. Johnson on the subject of Mr. Beauclerk's death, saying, 'Our Club has had a great loss since we met last.' He replied, 'A loss, that perhaps the whole nation could not repair!' The Doctor then went on to speak of his endowments, and particularly extolled the wonderful ease with which he uttered what was highly excellent. He said, that no man ever was so free when he was going to say a good thing, from a look that expressed that it was coming; or when he had said it, from a look that expressed that it had come. At Mr. Thrale's, some days before, when we were talking on the same subject, he said, referring to the same idea of his facility, 'That Beauclerk's talents were those which he had felt himself more disposed to envy, than those of any whom he had known.'

"At the evening I have spoken of above, at Mr. Vesey's, you would have been much gratified, as it exhibited an instance of the high importance in which Dr. Johnson's character is held, I think even beyond any I ever before was witness to. The company consisted chiefly of ladies, among whom were the Duchess Dowager of Portland, the Duchess of Beaufort, whom I suppose from her rank, I must name before her mother Mrs. Boscawen, and her elder sister Mrs. Lewson, who was likewise there; Lady Lucan, Lady Clermont, and others of note both for their station and understandings. Among the gentlemen were, Lord Althorpe, whom I have before named, Lord Macartney, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Lord Lucan, Mr. Wraxal, whose book you have
probably

probably seen, *'The Tour to the Northern Parts of Europe;*' a very agreeable ingenious man; Dr. Warren, Mr. Pepys, the Master in Chancery, whom I believe you know, and Dr. Barnard, the Provost of Eton. As soon as Dr. Johnson was come in and had taken a chair, the company began to collect round him till they became not less than four or five deep; those behind standing, and listening over the heads of those that were sitting near him. The conversation for some time was chiefly between Dr. Johnson and the Provost of Eton, while the others contributed occasionally their remarks. Without attempting to detail the particulars of the conversation, which perhaps if I did, I should spin my account out to a tedious length, I thought, my dear Sir, this general account of the respect with which our valued friend was attended to, might be acceptable."

Of the extraordinary tumult in 1780, Dr. Johnson has given the following concise, lively, and just account, in his "Letters to Mrs. Thrale."

On Friday the good Protestants met in St. George's Fields, at the summons of Lord George Gordon, and marching to Westminster, insulted the Lords and Commons, who all bore it with great tameness. At night the outrages began by the demolition of the mass-house by Lincoln's-Inn.

"An exact journal of a week's defiance of government I cannot give you. On Monday, Mr. Strahan, who had been insulted, spoke to Lord Mansfield, who had I think been insulted too, of the licentiousness of the populace; and his Lordship treated it as a very slight irregularity. On Tuesday night they pulled down Fielding's house, and burnt his goods in the street. They had

had gutted on Monday Sir George Savile's house, but the building was saved. On Tuesday evening, leaving Fielding's ruins, they went to Newgate to demand their companions who had been seized demolishing the chapel. The keeper could not release them but by the Mayor's permission, which he went to ask; at his return he found all the prisoners released, and Newgate in a blaze. They then went to Bloomsbury, and fastened upon Lord Mansfield's house, which they pulled down; and as for his goods they totally burnt them. They have since gone to Caen-wood, but a guard was there before them. They plundered some papists, I think, and burnt a Mass-house in Moorfields the same night.

"On Wednesday I walked with Dr. Scot to look at Newgate, and found it in ruins with the fire yet glowing. As I went by, the Protestants were plundering the Sessions house at the Old Bailey. There were not, I believe, a hundred; but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels, without trepidation, as men lawfully employed, in full day. Such is the cowardice of a commercial place. On Wednesday they broke open the Fleet, and the King's-bench, and the Marshalsea, and Woodstreet Compter, and Clerkenwell Bridewell, and released all the prisoners."

"At night they set fire to the Fleet, and to the King's-bench, and I know not how many other places; and one might see the glare of conflagration fill the sky from many parts. The sight was dreadful. Some people were threatened: Mr. Strahan advised me to take care of myself. Such a time of terror you have been happy in not seeing.

"The King said in council, 'That the magistrates

strates had not done their duty, but that he would do his own; and a proclamation was published, directing us to keep our servants within doors, as the peace was now to be preserved by force. The soldiers were sent out to different parts, and the town is now at quiet.

“The soldiers are stationed so as to be every where within call; there is no longer any body of rioters, and the individuals are haunted to their holes, and led to prison; Lord George was last night sent to the Tower. Mr. John Wilkes was this day in my neighbourhood, to seize the publishers of a seditious paper.

“Several chapels have been destroyed, and several inoffensive Papists have been plundered; but the high sport was to burn the gaols. This was a good rabble trick. The debtors and the criminals were all set at liberty; but of the criminals, as has always happened, many are already re-taken; and two pirates have surrendered themselves, and it is expected that they will be pardoned.

“Government now acts again with its proper force; and we are all again under the protection of the King and the Law. I thought that it would be agreeable to you and my master to have my testimony to the publick security: and that you would sleep more quietly when I told you that you are safe.

“There has, indeed, been an universal panick, from which the King was the first that recovered. Without the concurrence of his ministers, or the assistance of the civil magistrate, he put the soldiers in motion, and saved the town from calamities, such a rabble's government must naturally produce.

“The publick has escaped a very heavy calamity.
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The rioters attempted the Bank on Wednesday night, but in no great number, and like other thieves with no great resolution. Jack Wilkes headed the party that drove them away. It is agreed, that if they had seized the Bank on Tuesday, at the height of the panick, when no resistance had been prepared, they might have carried irrecoverably away whatever they had found. Jack, who was always zealous for order and decency, declares, that if he be trusted with power, he will not leave a rioter alive. There is, however, now no longer any need of heroism or bloodshed, no blue ribband is any longer worn."

On his birth day, Johnson has this note, "I am now beginning the seventy-second year of my life, with more strength of body, and greater vigour of mind, than I think is common at that age." But still he complains of sleepless nights and idle days, and forgetfulness, or neglect of resolutions. He thus pathetically expresses himself, "Surely I shall not spend my whole life with my own total disapprobation."

In 1781, he at last completed his "Lives of the Poets," of which he gives this account: "Some time in March I finished the 'Lives of the Poets,' which I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work, and working with vigour and haste." In a memorandum previous to this, he says of them: "Written I hope in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of piety."

Mr. Thrale's death, which happened on the 4th of April, 1781, was a very essential loss to Johnson, who, although he did not foresee all that afterwards happened, was sufficiently convinced that the comforts which Mr. Thrale's family afforded

forded him would now in a great measure cease. He, however, continued to shew a kind attention to his widow and children as long as it was acceptable: and he took upon him with a very earnest concern, the office of one of his executors, the importance of which seemed greater than usual to him, from his circumstances having been always such that he had scarcely any share in the real business of life. His friends of the Club were in hopes that Mr. Thrale might have made a liberal provision for him for his life, which, as Mr. Thrale left no son, and a very large fortune, it would have been highly to his honour to have done; and considering Dr. Johnson's age, could not have been of long duration: but he bequeathed him only two hundred pounds, which was the legacy given to each of his executors. Mr. B. could not but be somewhat diverted by hearing Johnson talk in a pompous manner of his new office, and particularly of the concerns of the brewery, which it was at last resolved should be sold. Lord Lucan tells a very good story, which, if not precisely exact, is certainly characteristical: that when the sale of Thrale's brewery was going forward, Johnson appeared bustling about, with an ink-horn and pen in his button-hole, like an exciseman; and on being asked what he really considered to be the value of the property which was to be disposed of, answered, "We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich, beyond the dreams of avarice."

At a city dinner where were present, Mr. Wilkes, Dr. Beattie, and Mr. Boswell, the Doctor gave an entertaining account of *Bet Flint*, a woman of the town, who, with some eccentric talents and much effrontery, forced herself upon

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his acquaintance. "Bet (said he) wrote her own Life in verse, which she brought to me, wishing that I would furnish her with a Preface to it (laughing). I used to say of her, that she was generally flut and drunkard—occasionally, whore and thief. She had, however, genteel lodgings, a spinnet on which she played, and a boy that walked before her chair. Poor Bet was taken up on a charge of stealing a counterpane, and tried at the Old-Bailey. Chief Justice ———, who loved a wench, summed up favorably, and she was acquitted. After which, Bet said, with a gay and satisfied air, 'Now that the counterpane is my own, I shall make a petticoat of it.'

He told his friends that he had in one day written six sheets of a translation from the French, adding, "I should be glad to see it now. I wish that I had copies of all the pamphlets written against me, as it is said Pope had. Had I known that I should make so much noise in the world, I should have been at pains to collect them. I believe there is hardly a day in which there is not something about me in the news-papers."

The following curious anecdote is from Dr. Burney's own words. "Dr. Burney related to Dr. Johnson the partiality which his writings had excited in a friend of Dr. Burney's, the late Mr. Bewley, well known in Norfolk by the name of the *Philosopher of Massingham*; who, from the *Ramblers* and *Plan of his Dictionary*, and long before the author's fame was established by the *Dictionary* itself, or any other work, had conceived such a reverence for him, that he urgently begged Dr. Burney to give him the cover of the first letter he had received from him, as
a relick

a relick of so estimable a writer. This was in 1755. In 1760, when Dr. Burney visited Dr. Johnson at the Temple in London, where he had then chambers, he happened to arrive there before he was up, and being shewn into the room where he was to breakfast, finding himself alone, he examined the contents of the apartment, to try whether he could undiscovered steal any thing to send to his friend Bewley, as another relick of the admirable Dr. Johnson. But finding nothing better to his purpose, he cut some bristles off his hearth-broom, and inclosed them in a letter to his country enthusiast, who received them with due reverence. The Doctor was so sensible of the honour done him by a man of genius and science, to whom he was an utter stranger, that he said to Dr. Burney, 'Sir, there is no man possessed of the smallest portion of modesty, but must be flattered with the admiration of such a man. I'll give him a set of my Lives, if he will do me the honour to accept of them.' In this he kept his word; and Dr. Burney had not only the pleasure of gratifying his friend with a present more worthy of his acceptance than the segment from the hearth-broom, but soon after of introducing him to Dr. Johnson himself in Bolt-court, with whom he had the satisfaction of conversing a considerable time not a fortnight before his death, which happened in St. Martin's street, during his visit to Dr. Burney, in the house where the great Sir Isaac Newton had lived and died before."

In autumn 1781, he went to Oxford, Birmingham, Lichfield, and Ashbourne, for which very good reasons might be given, in the conjectural yet positive manner of writers, who are proud to account for every event which

they relate. He himself however says, "The motives of my journey I hardly know. I omitted it last year, and am not willing to miss it again." But some good considerations arise, amongst which is the kindly recollection of Mr. Hector, surgeon, at Birmingham. "Hector is likewise an old friend, the only companion of my childhood that passed through the school with me. We have always loved one another; perhaps we may be made better by some serious conversation, of which however I have no distinct hope."

He says too, "At Lichfield, my native place, I hope to shew a good example by frequent attendance on publick worship."

In 1782, his complaints increased, and the history of his life for this year is little more than a recital of the variations of his illness, in the midst of which, however, it will appear from his letters, that the powers of his mind were in no degree impaired.

At a time when he was less able than he had once been to sustain a shock, he was suddenly deprived of Mr. Levett, which he thus communicated to Dr. Lawrence.

"SIR,

OUR old friend, Mr. Levett, who was last night eminently cheerful, died this morning. The man who lay in the same room, hearing an uncommon noise, got up and tried to make him speak, but without effect. He then called Mr. Holder, the apothecary, who thought when he came he thought him dead, opened a vein, but could draw no blood. So has ended the long life of a very useful and very blameless man.

I am, Sir, Your most humble servant,

Jan. 17, 1782.

SAM. JOHNSON.

Such

Such was Johnson's affectionate regard for Levett, that he honoured his memory with the following verses :

Condemn'd to Hope's delusive mine,

As on we toil from day to day,

By sudden blast or slow decline,

Our social comforts drop away.

Well try'd through many a varying year,

See LEVETT to the grave descend ;

Officious, innocent, sincere,

Of ev'ry friendless name the friend.

Yet still he fills Affection's eye,

Obscurely wise, and coarsely kind ;

Nor, lettered arrogance, deny

The praise to merit unrefin'd.

When fainting Nature call'd for aid,

And hov'ring Death prepar'd the blow,

His vigorous remedy display'd

The power of art without the show.

In Misery's darkest caverns known,

His ready help was ever nigh,

Where hopeless Anguish pours his groan,

And lonely Want retir'd to die.

No summons mock'd by chill delay,

No petty gains disdain'd by pride ;

The modest wants of ev'ry day

The toil of ev'ry day supply'd.

His virtues walk'd their narrow round,

Nor made a pause, nor left a void ;

And sure the Eternal Master found

His single talent well employ'd.

The busy day, the peaceful night,

Unfelt, uncounted, glided by ;

His frame was firm, his powers were bright,

Though now his eightieth year was nigh.

Then, with no throbs of fiery pain,
No cold gradations of decay,
Death broke at once the vital chain,
And freed his soul the nearest way.

In one of his registers of this year, there occurs the following curious passage: "Jan. 20. The ministry is dissolved. I prayed with Francis, and gave thanks." It has been the subject of discussion, whether there are two distinct particulars mentioned here, or that we are to understand the giving of thanks to be in consequence of the dissolution of the ministry. In support of the last of these conjectures, may be urged his mean opinion of that ministry, which has frequently appeared in the course of this work; and it is strongly confirmed by what he said on the subject to Mr. Seward:—"I am glad the ministry is removed. Such a bunch of imbecillity never disgraced a country. If they sent a messenger into the City to take up a printer, the messenger was taken up instead of the printer, and committed by the sitting Alderman. If they sent one army to the relief of another, the first army was defeated and taken before the second arrived. I will not say what they did was always wrong; but it was always done at a wrong time."

March 20, 1782, he thus writes to Captain Langton, then at Rochester.

"Of my life, from the time we last parted, the history is mournful. The spring of last year deprived me of Thrale, a man whose eye for fifteen years had scarcely been turned upon me but with respect or tenderness; for such another friend, the general course of human things will not suffer man to hope. I passed the summer at Streatham, but there was no Thrale: and
having

having idled away the summer with a weakly body and neglected mind, I made a journey to Staffordshire on the edge of winter. The season was dreary, I was sickly, and found the friends sickly whom I went to see. After a sorrowful sojourn, I returned to a habitation possessed for the present by two sick women, where my dear old friend, Mr. Levett, to whom as he used to tell me, I owe your acquaintance, died a few weeks ago, suddenly in his bed; there passed not I believe, a minute between health and death. At night, as at Mrs. Thrale's, I was musing in my chamber, I thought with uncommon earnestness, that however I might alter my mode of life, or whithersoever I might remove, I would endeavour to retain Levett about me; in the morning my servant brought me word that Levett was called to another state, a state for which, I think, he was not unprepared, for he was very useful to the poor. How much soever I valued him, I now wish that I had valued him more.

I am, dear Sir, your humble servant,

SAM, JOHNSON."

In June 1782 he thus writes to Mr. Boswell at Edinburgh. This year has afflicted me with a very irksome and severe disorder. My respiration has been much impeded, and much blood has been taken away. I am now harassed by a catarrhus cough, from which my purpose is to seek relief by change of air; and I am, therefore, preparing to go to Oxford."

In August he says, "This year has been very heavy. From the middle of January to the middle of June I was battered by one disorder after another; I am now very much recovered, and hope still to be better.

In September he writes to Mrs. Boswell;
"I have

“ I have not often received so much pleasure as from your invitation to Auchinleck. The journey thither and back is, indeed, too great for the latter part of the year ; but if my health were fully recovered, I would suffer no little heat and cold, nor a wet or a rough road to keep me from you. I am, indeed, not without hope of seeing Auchinleck again, but to make it a pleasant place I must see its lady well, and brisk, and airy.

In December he again writes to Mr. B. “ Having passed almost this whole year in a succession of disorders, I went in October to Brighthelmston, whither I came in a state of so much weakness, that I rested four times in walking between the inn and the lodging. By physic and abstinence I grew better, and am now reasonably easy, though at a great distance from health. I am afraid, however, that health begins, after seventy, and often long before, to have a meaning different from that which it had at thirty. But it is culpable to murmur at the established order of the creation, as it is vain to oppose it. He that lives, must grow old, and he that would rather grow old than die, has God to thank for the infirmities of old age.”

The death of Mr. Thrale had made a very material alteration upon Johnson, with respect to his reception in that family. The manly authority of the husband no longer curbed the lively exuberance of the lady ; and as her vanity had been fully gratified, by having the Colossus of Literature attached to her for many years, she gradually became less assiduous to please him.

He met Mr. Philip Metcalf often at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and other places, and was a good deal with him at Brighthelmston this autumn, being pleased at once with his excellent table and animated conversation. Mr. Metcalf shewed him
him

him great respect, and sent him a note that he might have the use of his carriage whenever he pleased. Johnson (3d October, 1782,) returned this polite answer:—"Mr. Johnson is very much obliged by the kind offer of the carriage; but he has no desire of using Mr. Metcalfe's carriage, except when he can have the pleasure of Mr. Metcalfe's company." Mr. Metcalfe could not but be highly pleased that his company was thus valued by Johnson, and he frequently attended him in airings. They also went together to Cirencester, and they visited Petworth and Cowdery, the venerable seat of the Lords Montacute. "Sir (said Johnson,) I should like to stay here four-and-twenty hours. We see here how our ancestors lived."

In 1783 he was more severely afflicted than ever, as will appear in the course of his correspondence; but still the same ardour for literature, the same constant piety, the same kindness for his friends, and the same vivacity, both in conversation and writing, distinguished him.

It has been observed and wondered at, that Mr. Charles Fox never talked with any freedom in the presence of Dr. Johnson, though it is well known that his conversation is various, fluent, and exceedingly agreeable. Johnson's experience, however, founded him in going on thus: "Fox never talks in private company, not from any determination not to talk, but because he has not the first motion. A man who is used to the applause of the House of Commons, has no wish for that of a private company. A man accustomed to throw for a thousand pounds, if set down to throw for sixpence, would not be at the pains to count his dice. Burke's talk is the ebullition of his mind; he does not talk from a desire of distinction, but because his mind is full."

Mr. B. and the Doctor once talked of the accusation against a gentleman for supposed delinquencies in India. JOHNSON. "What foundation there is for accusation I know not, but they will not get at him. Where bad actions are committed at so great a distance, a delinquent can obscure the evidence till the scent becomes cold; there is a cloud between, which cannot be penetrated, therefore all distant power is bad. I am clear that the best plan for the government of India is a despotic governor; for if he be a good man, it is evidently the best government; and supposing him to be a bad man, it is better to have one plunderer than many. A governor whose power is checked, lets others plunder that he himself may be allowed to plunder. But if despotic, he sees that the more he lets others plunder the less there will be for himself, so he restrains them; and though he himself plunders, the country is a gainer, compared with being plundered by numbers."

In the summer of 1783, Mr. B. left his friend the Doctor, being about to depart for Scotland. "He embraced me," says he, "and gave me his blessing, as usual when I was leaving him for any length of time. I walked from his door to-day with a fearful apprehension of what might happen before I returned."

Mr. B.'s anxious apprehensions at parting with him this year proved to be but too well founded; for not long afterwards he had a dreadful stroke of the palsy, of which there are very full and accurate accounts in letters written by himself, which shew with what composure his steady piety enabled him to behave.

To the Reverend Dr. JOHN TAYLOR.

"DEAR SIR,

"IT has pleased GOD, by a paralytic stroke in the night, to deprive me of speech.

"I am

"I am very desirous of Dr. Heberden's assistance, as I think my case is not past remedy. Let me see you as soon as it is possible. Bring Dr. Heberden with you, if you can; but come yourself at all events. I am glad you are so well, when I am so dreadfully attacked.

"I think that by a speedy application of stimulants much may be done. I question if a vomit, vigorous and rough, would not rouse the organs of speech to action. As it is too early to send, I will try to recollect what I can, that can be suspected to have brought on this dreadful distress.

"I have been accustomed to bleed frequently for an asthmatic complaint, but have forborne for some time by Dr. Pepy's persuasion, who perceived my legs beginning to swell. I sometimes alleviate a painful, or more properly an oppressive constriction of my chest, by opiates; and have lately taken opium frequently, but the last, or two last times, in smaller quantities. My largest dose is three grains, and last night I took but two. You will suggest these things (and they are all that I can call to mind) to Dr. Heberden. I am, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON.

"June 17, 1783."

Two days after he wrote thus to Mrs. Thrale:

"On Monday the 16th I sat for my picture, and walked a considerable way with little inconvenience. In the afternoon and evening I felt myself light and easy, and began to plan schemes of life. Thus I went to bed, and in a short time waked and sat up, as has been long my custom, when I felt a confusion and indistinctness in my head, which lasted, I suppose, about half a minute. I was alarmed, and prayed God, that however he might afflict my body, he would spare my understanding. This prayer, that

that I might try the integrity of my faculties, I made in Latin verse. The lines were not very good, but I knew them not to be very good: I made them easily, and concluded myself to be unimpaired in my faculties.

“ Soon after I perceived that I had suffered a paralytic stroke, and that my speech was taken from me. I had no pain, and so little dejection in this dreadful state, that I wondered at my own apathy, and considered that perhaps death itself, when it should come, would excite less horror than seems now to attend it.

“ In order to rouse the vocal organs, I took two drams. Wine has been celebrated for the production of eloquence. I put myself into violent motion, and I think repeated it; but all was vain. I then went to bed, and, strange as it may seem, I think, slept. When I saw light, it was time to contrive what I should do. Though God stopped my speech, he left me my hand, I enjoyed a mercy which was not granted to my dear friend Lawrence, who now perhaps overlooks me as I am writing, and rejoices that I have what he wanted. My first note was necessarily to my servant, who came in talking, and could not immediately comprehend why he should read what I put into his hands.

“ I then wrote a card to Mr. Allen, that I might have a discreet friend at hand, to act as occasion should require. In penning this note, I had some difficulty; my hand, I knew not how nor why, made wrong letters. I then wrote to Dr. Taylor to come to me, and bring Dr. Heberden; and I sent to Dr. Brocklesby, who is my neighbour. My physicians are very friendly and give me great hopes; but you may imagine my situation. I have so far recovered, my vocal powers, as to repeat the Lord's Prayer, with no very imperfect articulation. My memory,
I hope

I hope, yet remains as it was; but such an attack produces solicitude for the safety of every faculty."

To Mr. THOMAS DAVIES.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have had, indeed, a very heavy blow; but GOD, who yet spares my life, I humbly hope will spare my understanding, and restore my speech. As I am not at all helpless, I want no particular assistance, but am strongly affected by Mrs. Davies's tenderness; and when I think she can do me good, shall be very glad to call upon her. I had ordered friends to be shut out, but one or two have found the way in; and if you come you shall be admitted: for I know not whom I can see that will bring more amusement on his tongue, or more kindness in his heart. I am, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON.

"June 18, 1783."

The Doctor loved Davies cordially. One day, when he had treated him with too much asperity, Tom, who was not without pride and spirit, went off in a passion; but he had hardly reached home, when Frank, who had been sent after him, delivered this note:—"Come, come, dear Davies, I am always sorry when we quarrel; send me word that we are friends."

Such was the general vigour of his constitution, that he recovered from this alarming and severe attack with wonderful quickness; so that in July he was able to make a visit to Mr. Langton at Rochester, where he passed about a fortnight, and made little excursions as easily as at any time of his life. In August he went as far as the neighbourhood of Salisbury, to Heale, the seat of William Bowles, Esq.

O

While

While he was here he had a letter from Dr. Brocklesby, acquainting him of the death of Mrs. Williams, which affected him a good deal. Though for several years her temper had not been complacent, she had valuable qualities, and her departure left a blank in his house. Upon this occasion he, according to his habitual course of piety, composed a prayer.

He had once conceived the design of writing the Life of Oliver Cromwell, saying, that he thought it must be highly curious to trace his extraordinary rise to the supreme power, from so obscure a beginning. He at length laid aside his scheme, on discovering that all that can be told of him is already in print; and that it is impracticable to procure any authentic information, in addition to what the world is already possessed of.

He had likewise projected, but at what part of his life is not known, a work to shew how small a quantity of REAL FICTION there is in the world; and how the same images, with very little variation, have served all the authors who have ever written.

His thoughts in the latter part of his life were frequently employed on his deceased friends. He often muttered these, or such like sentences, "Poor man! and then he died."

On his return from Heale he wrote to Dr. Burney. "I came home on the 18th at noon to a very disconsolate house. You and I have lost our friends, but you have more friends at home. My domestic companion is taken from me. She is much missed, for her acquisitions were many, and her curiosity universal; so that she partook of every conversation. I am not well enough to go much out; and to sit, and eat, or fast alone, is very wearisome. I always mean to send my compliments to all the ladies."

His

His fortitude and patience met with severe trials during this year. The stroke of the palsy has been related circumstantially; but he was also afflicted with the gout, and was besides troubled with a complaint which not only was attended with immediate inconvenience, but threatened him with a painful chirurgical operation, from which most men would shrink. The complaint was a *sarcocoele*, which Johnson bore with uncommon firmness, and was not at all frightened while he looked forward to amputation. He was attended by Mr. Pott and also Mr. Cruikshank.

September 30, he writes to Mr. B. "Besides my constant and radical disease, I have been for these ten days much harrassed with the gout, but that has now remitted. I hope God will yet grant me a longer life, and make me less unfit to appear before him."

He this autumn received a visit from the celebrated Mrs. Siddons. He gives this account of it in one of his letters to Mrs. Thrale:—"Mrs. Siddons, in her visit to me, behaved with great modesty and propriety, and left nothing behind her to be censured or despised. Neither praise nor money, the two powerful corrupters of mankind, seem to have depraved her. I shall be glad to see her again. Her brother Kemble calls on me, and pleases me very well. Mrs. Siddons and I talked of plays; and she told me her intention of exhibiting this winter the characters of Constance, Catherine, and Isabella, in Shakspeare."

When Mrs. Siddons came into the room, there happened to be no chair ready for her, which he observing, said with a smile, "Madam, you who so often occasion a want of seats to other people, will the more easily excuse the want of one yourself."

Having placed himself by her, he with great good humour entered upon a consideration of the English drama;

drama; and, among other enquiries, particularly asked her which of Shakspeare's characters she was most pleased with. Upon her answering that she thought the character of Queen Catherine in Henry the Eighth the most natural. "I think so too, Madam, (said he;) and whenever you perform it, I will once more hobble out to the theatre myself." Mrs. Siddons promised she would do herself the honour of acting his favourite part for him; but many circumstances happened to prevent the representation of King Henry the Eighth during the Doctor's life.

In the course of this visit, he thus gave his opinion upon the merits of some of the principal performers whom he remembered to have seen upon the stage. "Mrs. Porter, in the vehemence of rage, and Mrs. Clive in the sprightliness of humour, I have never seen equalled. What Clive did best, she did better than Garrick; but could not do half so many things well; she was a better romp than any I ever saw in nature. Pritchard, in common life, was a vulgar idiot; she would talk of her *gown*: but, when she appeared upon the stage, seemed to be inspired by gentility and understanding. I once talked with Colley Cibber, and thought him ignorant of the principles of his art. Garrick, Madam, was no declaimer; there was not one of his own scene-shifters who could not have spoken *To be, or not to be*, better than he did; yet he was the only actor I ever saw whom I could call a master both in tragedy and comedy; though I liked him best in comedy. A true conception of character, and natural expression of it, were his distinguishing excellencies." Having expatiated, with his usual force and eloquence, on Mr. Garrick's extraordinary eminence as an actor, he concluded with this compliment to his social talents: "And after all, Ma-
dam,

dam, I thought him less to be envied on the stage than at the head of a table."

Johnson, indeed, had thought more upon the subject of acting than might be generally supposed. Talking of it one day to Mr. Kemble, he said, "Are you, Sir, one of those enthusiasts who believe yourself transformed into the very character you represent?" Upon Mr. Kemble's answering that he had never felt so strong a persuasion himself; "To be sure not, Sir, (said Johnson). The thing is impossible. And if Garrick really believed himself to be that monster Richard the Third, he deserved to be hanged every time he performed it."

1783. Notwithstanding the complication of disorders under which Johnson now laboured, he did not resign himself to despondency and discontent, but with wisdom and spirit endeavoured to console and amuse his mind with as many innocent enjoyments as he could procure. Sir John Hawkins has mentioned the cordiality with which he insisted that such of the members of the old club in Ivy-lane as survived should meet again and dine together, which they did, twice at a tavern, and once at his house: and in order to insure himself society in the evening for three days in the week, he instituted a Club at the Essex Head, in Essex-street, then kept by Samuel Greaves, an old servant of Mr. Thrale's.

It did not suit Sir Joshua to be one of this Club. But it was graced by Mr. Daines Barrington, Dr. Brocklesby, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Cooke, Mr. Jodrel, Mr. Paradise, Dr. Horsley, and Mr. Windham.

In the end of this year he was seized with a spasmodic asthma of such violence, that he was confined to the house in great pain, being sometimes obliged to sit all night in his chair, a recumbent posture being so hurtful to his respiration, that he could not endure lying in bed; and there came upon him at the

same time that oppressive and fatal disease, a dropfy. It was a very severe winter, which probably aggravated his complaints; and the solitude in which Mr. Levett and Mrs. Williams had left him, rendered his life very gloomy. Mrs. Desmoulins, who still lived, was herself so very ill that she could contribute very little to his relief. He, however, had none of that unsocial shyness which we commonly see in people afflicted with sickness. He did not hide his head in abstraction; he did not deny himself to the visits of his friends and acquaintances; but at all times, when he was not overcome by sleep, was as ready for conversation as in his best days.

To Mrs. LUCY PORTER, in Lichfield.

"DEAR MADAM,

"You may perhaps think me negligent that I have not written to you again upon the loss of your brother; but condolences and consolations are such common and such useless things, that the omission of them is no great crime; and my own diseases occupy my mind, and engage my care. My nights are miserably restless, and my days, therefore, are heavy. I try, however, to hold up my head as high as I can.

SAM. JOHNSON.

"London, Nov. 29, 1783."

His attention to the Essex Head Club, even in 1784, the year of his decease, appears from the following letter to Mr. Alderman Clark, a gentleman for whom he deservedly entertained a great regard.

To RICHARD CLARK, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,

"You will receive a requisition, according to the rules of the Club, to be at the house as President of the night. This turn comes once a month, and

and the member is obliged to attend, or send another in his place. You were enrolled in the Club by my invitation, and I ought to introduce you; but as I am hindered by sickness, Mr. Hoole will very properly supply my place as introducer, or yours as President. I hope in milder weather to be a very constant attendant. I am, Sir, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON.

"Jan. 27, 1784.

"You ought to be informed, that the forfeits began with the year, and that every night of non-attendance incurs the mulct of three-pence, that is, nine-pence a week."

To JAMES BOSWELL, *Esq.*

"DEAR SIR,

"I hear of many inquiries which your kindness has disposed you to make after me. I have long intended you a long letter, which perhaps the imagination of its length hindered me from beginning. I will, therefore, content myself with a shorter.

"Having promoted the institution of a new Club in the neighbourhood, at the house of an old servant of Thrale's, I went thither to meet the company, and was seized with a spasmodic asthma so violent, that with difficulty I got to my own house, in which I have been confined eight or nine weeks, and from which I know not when I shall be able to go even to church. The asthma, however, is not the worst. A dropy gains ground upon me; my legs and thighs are very much swollen with water, which I should be content if I could keep there, but I am afraid that it will soon be higher. My nights are very sleepless and very tedious. And yet I am extremely afraid of dying.

"My physicians try to make me hope, that much of my malady is the effect of cold, and that
some

some degree at least of recovery is to be expected from vernal breezes and summer suns. If my life is prolonged to autumn, I should be glad to try a warmer climate; though how to travel with a diseased body, without a companion to conduct me, and with very little money, I do not well see. Ramsay has recovered his limbs in Italy; and Fielding was sent to Lisbon, where, indeed, he died; but he was, I believe, past hope when he went. Think for me what I can do.

"I received your pamphlet, and when I write again may perhaps tell you some opinion about it; but you will forgive a man struggling with disease his neglect of disputes, politics, and pamphlets. Let me have your prayers. My compliments to your lady, and young ones. Ask your physicians about my case; and desire Sir Alexander Dick to write me his opinion.

I am, dear Sir, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON.

"Feb. 11, 1784."

To Mrs. LUCY PORTER, in Lichfield.

"MY DEAREST LOVE,

"I have been extremely ill of an asthma and dropsy, but received, by the mercy of God, sudden and unexpected relief last Thursday, by the discharge of twenty pints of water. Whether I shall continue free, or shall fill again, cannot be told. Pray for me.

"Death, my dear, is very dreadful; let us think nothing worth our care but how to prepare for it: what we know amiss in ourselves let us make haste to amend, and put our trust in the mercy of God, and the intercession of our SAVIOUR. I am, dear Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

"Feb. 23, 1784."

To

To JAMES BOSWELL, *Esq.*

"DEAR SIR,

"I am too much pleased with the attention which you and your dear lady show to my welfare, not to be diligent in letting you know the progress which I make towards health. The dropsy, by God's blessing, has now run almost totally away by natural evacuation; and the asthma, if not irritated by cold, gives me little trouble. While I am writing this, I have not any sensation of debility or disease. But I do not yet venture out, having been confined to the house from the thirteenth of December, now a quarter of a year.

"When it will be fit for me to travel as far as Auchinleck, I am not able to guess; but such a letter as Mrs. Boswell's might draw any man, not wholly motionless, a great way. Pray tell the dear lady how much her civility and kindness have touched and gratified me.

"Our parliamentary tumults have now begun to subside, and the King's authority is in some measure re-established. Mr. Pitt will have great power; but you must remember, that what he has to give must, at least for some time, be given to those who gave, and those who preserve his power. A new minister can sacrifice little to esteem or friendship; he must, till he is settled, think only of extending his interest.

"Please to bring with you Baxter's Anacreon; and if you procure heads of Hector Boece, the historian, and Arthur Johnston, the poet, I will put them in my room, or any other of the fathers of Scottish literature.

"I wish you an easy and happy journey, and hope I need not tell you that you will be welcome

come to, dear Sir, your most affectionate, humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

"London, March 18, 1784."

To Mr. Langton he wrote with that cordiality which was suitable to the long friendship which had subsisted between him and that gentleman.

March 27. "Since you left me, I have continued in my own opinion, and in Dr. Brocklesby's, to grow better with respect to all my formidable and dangerous distempers; though to a body battered and shaken as mine has lately been, it is to be feared that weak attacks may be sometimes mischievous. I have, indeed, by standing carelessly at an open window, got a very troublesome cough, which it has been necessary to appease by opium, in larger quantities than I like to take, and I have not found it give way so readily as I expected; its obstinacy, however, seems at last disposed to submit to the remedy, and I know not whether I should then have a right to complain of any morbid sensation. My asthma is, I am afraid, constitutional and incurable; but it is only occasional, and unless it be excited by labour or by cold, gives me no molestation, nor does it lay very close siege to life; for Sir John Floyer, whom the physical race consider as author of one of the best books upon it, panted on to ninety, as was supposed; and why were we content with supposing a fact so interesting, of a man so conspicuous, because he corrupted, at perhaps seventy or eighty, the register, that he might pass for younger than he was? He was not much less than eighty, when to a man of rank who modestly asked him his age, he answered, 'Go look;' though he was in general a man of civility and elegance."

April

April 8. "I am still disturbed by my cough; but what thanks have I not to pay, when my cough is the most painful sensation that I feel! and from that I expect hardly to be released, while winter continues to gripe us with so much pertinacity. The year has now advanced eighteen days beyond the equinox, and still there is very little remission of the cold. When warm weather comes, which surely must come at last, I hope it will help both me and your young lady.

"Let me have your prayers for the completion of my recovery: I am now better than I ever expected to have been. May God add to his mercies the grace that may enable me to use them according to his will. My compliments to all."

What follows is a beautiful specimen of his gentleness and complacency to a young lady his god-child, one of the daughters of his friend Mr. Langton, then in her seventh year. He took the trouble to write it in a large round hand, nearly resembling printed characters, that she might have the satisfaction of reading it herself.

To Miss JANE LANGTON, in Rochester, Kent.

"MY DEAREST MISS JENNY,

"I am sorry that your pretty letter has been so long without being answered; but, when I am not pretty well, I do not always write plain enough for young ladies. I am glad, my dear, to see that you write so well, and hope that you mind your pen, your book, and your needle, for they are all necessary. Your books will give you knowledge, and make you respected; and your needle will find you useful employment when you do not care to read. When you are a little older, I hope you will be very diligent in learning arithmetic; and, above all, that

that through your whole life you will carefully
 say your prayers, and read your bible. I am,
 my dear,

Your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

"May 10, 1784."

One morning in the May of this year, he communicated to Mr. B. with solemn earnestness, a very remarkable circumstance which had happened in the course of his illness, when he was much distressed by the dropsy. He had shut himself up, and employed a day in particular exercises of religion,—fasting, humiliation, and prayer. On a sudden he obtained extraordinary relief, for which he looked up to heaven with grateful devotion. He made no direct inference from this fact; but from his manner of telling it, Mr. B. could perceive that it appeared to him as something more than an incident in the common course of events. It is but reasonable to think that there was an intermediate interposition of divine Providence, and that "the fervent prayer of this righteous man" availed.

On the evening of Saturday, May 15, he was in fine spirits, at the Essex-Head Club. He told the company, "I dined yesterday at Mrs. Garrick's, with Mrs. Carter, Miss Hannah More, and Miss Fanny Burney. Three such women are not to be found. I know not where I could find a fourth, except Mrs. Lennox, who is superior to them all." BOSWELL. "What! had you them all to yourself, Sir?" JOHNSON. "I had them all as much as they were had; but it might have been better had there been more company there." BOSWELL. "Might not Mrs. Montagu have been a fourth?" JOHNSON. "Sir, Mrs. Montagu does not make a trade of her wit. But Mrs. Montagu is a very extraordinary woman;

woman; she has a constant stream of conversation, and it is always impregnated; it has always meaning." BOSWELL. "Mr. Burke has a constant stream of conversation." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; if a man were to go by chance at the same time with Burke under a shed, to shun a shower, he would say This is an extraordinary man. If Burke should go into a stable to see his horse drest, the ostler would say we have had an extraordinary man here." BOSWELL. "Foote was a man who never failed in conversation. If he had gone into a stable—" JOHNSON. "Sir, if he had gone into a stable, the ostler would have said here has been a comical fellow; but he would not have respected him." BOSWELL. "And, Sir, the ostler would have answered him, would have given him as good as he brought, as the common saying is." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; and Foote would have answered the ostler.—When Burke does not descend to be merry, his conversation is very superior indeed. There is no proportion between the powers which he shews in serious talk and in jocularly. When he lets himself down to that, he is in the kennel." He presently called out with a sudden air of exultation, as the thought started into his mind, "O! Gentlemen, I must tell you a very great thing. The Empress of Russia, *I hear*, has ordered the 'Rambler' to be translated into the Russian language. So I shall be read on the banks of the Wolga. Horace boasts that his fame would extend as far as the banks of the Rhone; now the Wolga is farther from me than the Rhone was from Horace."

In a conversation between the Doctor and Mr. Boswell, he charged Mr. Langton with what he thought want of judgment upon an interesting occasion. "When I was ill (said he) I desired he would tell me sincerely in what he thought my life was

P

faulty.

faulty. Sir, he brought me a sheet of paper, on which he had written down several texts of Scripture, recommending christian charity. And when I questioned him what occasion I had given for such an animadversion, all that he could say amounted to this—That I sometimes contradicted people in conversation. Now what harm does it do to any man to be contradicted?" BOSWELL. "I suppose he meant the *manner* of doing it; roughly—and harshly." JOHNSON. "And who is the worse for that?" BOSWELL. "It hurts people of weak nerves." JOHNSON. "I know no such weak-nerved people." Mr. Burke, to whom Mr. B. related this conference, said, "It is well, if when a man comes to die, he has nothing heavier upon his conscience than having been a little rough in conversation."

Johnson, at the time when the paper was presented to him, though at first pleased with the attention of his friend, whom he thanked in an earnest manner, soon exclaimed, in a loud and angry tone, "What is your drift, Sir?" Sir Joshua Reynolds pleasantly observed, that it was a scene for a comedy, to see a penitent get into a violent passion, and belabour his confessor.

In the latter end of May, he had a great desire to go to Oxford, as his first jaunt after his illness; and Mr. B. had promised to accompany him. On Thursday, June 3, the Oxford post-coach took them up in the morning at Bolt-court. The other two passengers were Mrs. Beresford and her daughter, two very agreeable ladies from America; they were going to Worcestershire, where they then resided.

Mr. B. was surprised at his talking without reserve in the public post-coach of the state of his affairs; "I have (said he) about the world, I think, above

above a thousand pounds, which I intend shall afford Frank* an annuity of seventy pounds a year."

At the inn where they stopped, he was exceedingly dissatisfied with some roast mutton which they had for dinner. He scolded the waiter, saying, "It is as bad as bad can be. It is ill-fed, ill-killed, ill-kept, and ill-drest."

On Wednesday, June 19, Dr. Johnson and Mr. B. returned to London; he was not well that day, and said very little, employing himself chiefly in reading Euripides. He expressed some displeasure at Mr. B. for not observing sufficiently the various objects upon the road. "If I had your eyes, Sir, (said he) I should count the passengers." It was wonderful how accurate his observations of visual objects was, notwithstanding his imperfect eyesight, owing to a habit of attention. That he was much satisfied with the respect paid to him at Dr. Adams's, is thus attested by himself: "I returned last night from Oxford, after a fortnight's abode with Dr. Adams, who treated me as well as I could expect or wish; and he that contents a sick man—a man whom it is impossible to please—has surely done his part well."

His generous humanity to the miserable was almost beyond example. The following instance is well attested: Coming home late one night, he found a poor woman lying in the street, so much exhausted, that she could not walk; he took her upon his back, and carried her to his house, where he discovered that she was one of those wretched females who had fallen into the lowest state of vice, poverty, and disease. Instead of harshly upbraiding her, he had her taken care of with all tenderness for a long time, at a considerable expence, till she was restored to health, and endeavoured to put her into a virtuous way of living.

* His black servant,

On Tuesday, June 22, Mr. B. dined with him at THE LITERARY CLUB, the last time of his being in that respectable society. The other members present were the Bishop of St. Asaph, Lord Eliot, Lord Palmerston, Dr. Fordyce, and Mr. Malone. He looked ill; but had such a manly fortitude, that he did not trouble the company with melancholy complaints. They all shewed evident marks of kind concern about him, with which he was much pleased; and in return, he exerted himself, and was as entertaining as his indisposition would allow.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

THE anxiety of Johnson's friends to preserve so estimable a life, as long as human means might be supposed to have influence, made them plan for him a retreat from the severity of a British winter, to the mild climate of Italy. This scheme was at last brought to a serious resolution at General Paoli's. One essential matter, however, was necessary to be previously settled, which was obtaining such an addition to his income, as would be sufficient to enable him to defray the expence in a manner becoming the first literary character of a great nation; and, independent of all his other merits, the Author of THE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. The person to whom, above all others, Mr. B. thought application should be made, was the Lord Chancellor, because he highly valued Johnson. Mr. B. therefore, though personally very little known to his Lordship, wrote to him, stating the case, and requesting his good offices for Dr. Johnson*.

On Friday, June 25, Mr. B. dined with the Doctor at General Paoli's, "where," he says in one of his letters to Mrs. Thrale, "I love to dine." There were a variety of dishes much to his taste, of all which he seemed to eat so much, that Mr. B. was afraid he might be hurt by it; and whispered to the General

* It will hereafter appear, that the Chancellor's zeal in this negotiation, reflected on him as much honour as it did disgrace on those who opposed the request.

his fear, and begged he might not press him. "Alas! (said the General,) see how very ill he looks; he can live but a very short time. Would you refuse any slight gratifications to a man under sentence of death? There is a humane custom in Italy, by which persons in that melancholy situation are indulged with having whatever they like best to eat and drink, even with expensive delicacies."

On Monday, June 28, Mr. B. had the honour to receive from the Lord Chancellor the following letter :

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"SIR,

"I should have answered your letter immediately; if (being much engaged when I received it) I had not put it in my pocket, and forgot to open it till this morning.

"I am much obliged to you for the suggestion; and I will adopt and press it as far as I can. The best argument, I am sure, and I hope it is not likely to fail, is Dr. Johnson's merit.—But it will be necessary, if I should be so unfortunate as to miss seeing you, to converse with Sir Joshua on the sum it will be proper to ask—in short, upon the means of setting him out. It would be a reflection on us all, if such a man should perish for want of the means to take care of his health. Yours, &c.

THURLOW."

This letter gave Mr. B. a very high satisfaction; he next day went and shewed it to Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was exceedingly pleased with it. Sir Joshua thought that Mr. B. should now communicate the negociation to Dr. Johnson, who might afterwards complain if the attention with which it had been honoured, should be too long concealed from

from him. Mr. B. therefore hastened to Johnson, and was told by him that he was then rather better. BOSWELL. "I am very anxious about you, Sir, and particularly that you should go to Italy for the winter, which I believe is your own wish." JOHNSON. "It is, Sir." BOSWELL. "You have no objection, I presume, but the money it would require." JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir." Upon which Mr. B. gave him a particular account of what had been done, and read to him the Lord Chancellor's letter.—He listened with much attention; then warmly said, "This is taking prodigious pains about a man."—"O! Sir, (said Mr. B. with most sincere affection,) your friends would do every thing for you." He paused—grew more and more agitated—till tears started into his eyes, and he exclaimed with fervent emotion, "God bless you all!" Mr. B. was so affected that he also shed tears.—After a short silence, he renewed and extended his grateful benediction, "God bless you all, for JESUS CHRIST's sake!" They both remained for some time unable to speak.—The Doctor rose suddenly and quitted the room, quite melted in tenderness.

On Wednesday, June 30, Mr. B. and Dr. Johnson both dined with Sir Joshua Reynolds; and both his friends were so sanguine in their expectations, that they expatiated with confidence on the large provision which they were sure would be made for him, conjecturing whether munificence would be displayed in one large donation, or in an ample increase of his pension. He himself caught so much of their enthusiasm, as to allow himself to suppose it not impossible that their hopes might in one way or other be realised. He said that he would rather have his pension doubled than a grant of a thousand pounds; "For (said he) though probably I may not live to receive as much as a thousand pounds, a man

would have the consciousness that he should pass the remainder of his life in splendour, how long soever it might be."

As an instance of extraordinary liberality of friendship, he now told Sir Joshua and Mr. B. that Dr. Brocklesby had, upon this occasion, offered him a hundred a year for his life. A grateful tear started into his eye, as he spoke this in a faltering tone.

Johnson wrote to Sir Joshua Reynolds on July 6, as follows: "I am going, I hope, in a few days, to try the air of Derbyshire, but hope to see you before I go. Let me, however, mention to you what I have much at heart.—If the Chancellor should continue his attention to Mr. Boswell's request, and confer with you on the means of relieving my languid state, I am very desirous to avoid the appearance of asking money upon false pretences. I desire you to represent to his Lordship, what, as soon as it is suggested, he will perceive to be reasonable—That, if I grow much worse, I shall be afraid to leave my physicians, to suffer the inconveniences of travel, and pine in the solitude of a foreign country—That, if I grow much better, of which indeed there is now little appearance, I shall not wish to leave my friends, and my domestic comforts; for I do not travel for pleasure or curiosity; yet if I should recover, curiosity would revive.—In my present state, I am desirous to make a struggle for a little longer life, and hope to obtain some help from a softer climate. Do for me what you can." He wrote to Mr. B. July 26: "I wish your affairs could have permitted a longer and continued exertion of your zeal and kindness. They that have your kindness, may want your ardour. In the mean time I am very feeble, and very dejected."

By a letter from Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. B. (now in Scotland,) was informed, that the Lord Chancellor

Chancellor had called on him, and acquainted him that the application had not been successful; but that his Lordship, after speaking highly in praise of Johnson, as a man who was an honour to his country, desired Sir Joshua to let him know, that on granting a mortgage of his pension, he should draw on his Lordship to the amount of five or six hundred pounds; and that his Lordship explained the meaning of the mortgage to be, that he wished the business to be conducted in such a manner, as that Dr. Johnson should appear to be under the least possible obligation. Sir Joshua mentioned that he had by the same post communicated all this to Dr. Johnson.

How Johnson was affected upon the occasion will appear from what he wrote to Sir Joshua Reynolds:

Ashbourne, Sept. 9. "Many words I hope are not necessary between you and me, to convince you what gratitude is excited in my heart by the Chancellor's liberality, and your kind offices. * * * *

"I have enclosed a letter to the Chancellor, which, when you have read it, you will be pleased to seal with a head, or any other general seal, and convey it to him: had I sent it directly to him, I should have seemed to overlook the favour of your intervention."

To the LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR.

"MY LORD,

"After a long and not inattentive observation of mankind, the generosity of your Lordship's offer raises in me not less wonder than gratitude. Bounty, so liberally bestowed, I should gladly receive, if my condition made it necessary; for, to such a mind, who would not be proud to own his obligations? But it has pleased GOD to restore me to so great a measure of health, that if I should now appropriate so much of a fortune destined to do good, I could not escape from myself the charge of advancing a
false

false claim. My journey to the continent, though I once thought it necessary, was never much encouraged by my physicians; and I was very desirous that your Lordship should be told of it by Sir Joshua Reynolds, as an event very uncertain; for if I grew much better, I should not be willing, if much worse, not able, to migrate.—Your Lordship was first solicited without my knowledge; but when I was told, that you were pleased to honour me with your patronage, I did not expect to hear of a refusal; yet, as I have had no long time to brood hope, and have not rioted in imaginary opulence, this cold reception has been scarce a disappointment; and, from your Lordship's kindness, I have received a benefit, which only men like you are able to bestow. I shall now live *mihi carior*, with a higher opinion of my own merit. I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obliged,
Most grateful, and most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

"Sept. 1784."

Let us now contemplate Johnson thirty years after the death of his wife, still retaining for her all the tenderness of affection.

To the Reverend Mr. BAGSHAW, at Bromley.

"SIR,

"Perhaps you may remember, that in the year 1753, you committed to the ground my dear wife. I now entreat your permission to lay a stone upon her; and have sent the inscription, that, if you find it proper, you may signify your allowance.

"You will do me a great favour by showing the place where she lies, that the stone may protect her remains.

"Mr.

"Mr. Ryland will wait on you for the inscription, and procure it to be engraved. You will easily believe that I shrink from this mournful office. When it is done, if I have strength remaining, I will visit Bromley once again, and pay you part of the respect to which you have a right from, Reverend Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

"July 12, 1784."

Next day he set out on a jaunt to Staffordshire and Derbyshire, flattering himself that he might be in some degree relieved: and during his absence from London he kept up a correspondence with several of his friends.

August 14, he writes to Dr. Brocklesby, "I have hitherto sent you only melancholy letters, you will be glad to hear some better account. Yesterday the asthma remitted, perceptibly remitted, and I moved with more ease than I have enjoyed for many weeks. May God continue his mercy.—This account I would not delay, because I am not a lover of complaints, or complainers, and yet I have, since we parted, uttered nothing till now but terror and sorrow. Write to me, dear Sir,"

August 16. "Better I hope, and better. My respiration gets more and more ease and liberty. I went to church yesterday, after a very liberal dinner, without any inconvenience; it is indeed no long walk, but I never walked it without difficulty, since I came, before. * * * * * the intention was only to overpower the seeming *vis inertiae* of the pectoral and pulmonary muscles.—I am favoured with a degree of ease that very much delights me, and do not despair of another race upon the stairs of the Academy.—If I were, however, of a humour to see, or to show the state of my body, on the dark side, I might say,

' Quid

‘*Quid te exempta juvat spinis de pluribus una?*’

The nights are still sleepless, and the water rises, though it does not rise very fast. Let us, however, rejoice in all the good that we have. The remission of one disease will enable nature to combat the rest.”

October 25. “You write to me with a zeal that animates, and a tenderness that melts me. I am not afraid either of a journey to London, or a residence in it. I came down with little fatigue, and am now not weaker. In the smoky atmosphere I was delivered from the dropsy, which I consider as the original and radical disease. The town is my element; there are my friends, there are my books, to which I have not yet bidden farewell, and there are my amusements. Sir Joshua told me long ago, that my vocation was to public life, and I hope still to keep my station, till God shall bid me *Go in peace.*”

To DR. BURNEY. August 2. “The weather, you know, has not been balmy; I am now reduced to think, and am at last content to talk of the weather. Pride must have a fall.—I have lost dear Mr. Allen*, and wherever I turn, the dead or the dying meet my notice, and force my attention upon misery and mortality. Mrs. Burney’s escape from so much danger, and her ease after so much pain, throws, however, some radiance of hope upon the gloomy prospect. May her recovery be perfect, and her continuance long.—I struggle hard for life. I take physic, and take air; my friend’s chariot is always ready. We have run this morning twenty-four miles, and could run forty-eight more. *But who can run the race with death?*”

* A Printer, who lived in Bolt-court.

To the Right Honourable WILLIAM GERARD
HAMILTON.

"DEAR SIR,

"Considering what reason you gave me in the spring to conclude that you took part in whatever good or evil might befall me, I ought not to have omitted so long the account which I am now about to give you.—My diseases are an asthma and a dropsy, and, what is less curable, seventy-five. Of the dropsy, in the beginning of the summer, or in the spring, I recovered to a degree which struck with wonder both me and my physicians: the asthma now is likewise, for a time, very much relieved. I went to Oxford, where the asthma was very tyrannical, and the dropsy began again to threaten me, but seasonable physic stopped the inundation: I then returned to London, and in July took a resolution to visit Staffordshire and Derbyshire, where I am yet struggling with my diseases. The dropsy made another attack, and was not easily ejected, but at last gave way. The asthma suddenly remitted in bed, on the 13th of August, and though now very oppressive, is, I think, still something gentler than it was before the remission. My limbs are miserably debilitated, and my nights are sleepless and tedious.—When you read this, dear Sir, you are not sorry that I wrote no sooner. I will not prolong my complaints. I hope still to see you *in a happier hour*, to talk over what we have often talked, and perhaps to find new topics of merriment, or new incitements to curiosity. I am, dear Sir, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON.

"Lichfield, Oct. 20, 1784."

As Johnson had now very faint hopes of recovery,
and as Mrs. Thrale was no longer devoted to
2 him,

him, it might have been supposed that he would have naturally have chosen to remain in the comfortable house of his beloved wife's daughter, and end his life where he began it, but there was in him an animated and lofty spirit, and however complicated diseases might depress ordinary mortals, all who saw him, beheld and acknowledged the *invictum animum Catonis*. Such was his intellectual ardour even at this time, that he said to one friend, "Sir, I look upon every day to be lost in which I do not make a new acquaintance." And to another, when talking of his illness, "I will be conquered; I will not capitulate." And such was his love of London, so high a relish had he of its magnificent extent, and variety of intellectual entertainment, that he languished when absent from it, his mind having become quite luxurious from the long habit of enjoying the metropolis; and therefore although at Lichfield, surrounded with friends, who loved and revered him, and for whom he had a very sincere affection, he still found that such conversation as London affords, could be found no where else. These feelings, joined probably to some flattering hopes of aid, from the eminent physicians and surgeons in London, who kindly and generously attended him without accepting of fees, made him resolve to return to the capital.

He arrived in London on the 16th of November, and next day sent to Dr. Burney, the following note.

"Mr. Johnson, who came home last night, sends his respects to dear Dr. Burney, and all the dear Burneys, little and great."

To Mr. HECTOR, in Birmingham.

"DEAR SIR,

"I did not reach Oxford until Friday morning, and then I sent Francis to see the balloon fly, but could not go myself. I staid at Oxford 'till Tuesday, and then came in the common vehicle easily to London. I am as I was, and having seen Dr. Brocklesby, am to ply the squills; but whatever be their efficacy, this world must soon pass away. Let us think seriously on our duty.—I send my kindest respects to dear Mrs. Careless; let me have the prayers of both. We have all lived long, and must soon part. God have mercy on us for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. I am, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON."

"London, Nov. 17, 1784.

Soon after Johnson's return to the metropolis, both the asthma and dropsy became more violent and distressful. He had for some time kept a journal in Latin, of the state of his illness, and the remedies which he used, under the title of *Aegri Ephemeris*, which he began on the 6th of July, but continued it no longer than the 8th of November; finding, probably, that it was a mournful and unavailing register.

Johnson's affection for his departed relations seemed to grow warmer as he approached nearer to the time when he might hope to see them again. It probably appeared to him that he should upbraid himself with unkind inattention, were he to leave the world, without having paid a tribute of respect to their memory.

To Mr. GREEN, Apothecary, at Lichfield.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have enclosed the Epitaph for my Father, Mother, and Brother, to be all engraved on the large size, and laid in the middle aisle in St. Michael's church, which I request the clergyman and church-wardens to permit.

"The first care must be to find the exact place of interment, that the stone may protect the bodies. Then let the stone be deep, massy, and hard; and do not let the difference of ten pounds, or more, defeat our purpose.

I have enclosed ten pounds, and Mrs. Porter will pay you ten more, which I gave her for the same purpose. What more is wanted shall be sent; and I beg that all possible haste may be made, for I wish to have it done while I am yet alive. Let me know, dear Sir, that you receive this. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON."

Dec. 2, 1784.

To Mrs. LUCY POTTER, in Lichfield.

"DEAR MADAM,

"I am very ill, and desire your prayers. I have sent Mr. Green the Epitaph, and a power to call on you for ten pounds.

"I laid this summer a stone over Tetty*, in the chapel of Bromley in Kent. The inscription is in Latin, of which this is the English. [Here a translation.]

"That this is done, I thought it fit that you should know. What care will be taken of us, who

* His wife.

who can tell? May God pardon and bless us, for Jesus Christ's sake. I am, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON."

Dec. 2. 1784.

Dr. Heberden, Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. Warren, and Dr. Butter, physicians, generously attended him, without accepting of any fees, as did Mr. Cruikshank, surgeon; and all that could be done from professional skill and ability was tried, to prolong a life so truly valuable. He himself, indeed, having on account of his very bad constitution been perpetually applying himself to medical inquiries, united his own efforts with those of the gentlemen who attended him; and imagining that the dropical collection of water which oppressed him, might be drawn off, by making incisions in his body, he, with his usual resolute defiance of pain, cut deep, when he thought that his surgeon had done it too tenderly.

About eight or ten days before his death, when Dr. Brocklesby paid him his morning visit, he seemed very low and desponding, and said, "I have been as a dying man all night." He then emphatically broke out, in the words of Shakespeare,

"Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseas'd?

"Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow?

"Raze out the written troubles of the brain?

"And with some sweet oblivious antidote,

"Cleanse the full bosom of that perilous stuff,

"Which weighs upon the heart."

To which Dr. Brocklesby readily answered from the same great poet:

"———therein the patient

"Must minister unto himself."

Johnson expressed himself much satisfied with the application.

On another day after this, when talking on the subject of prayer, Dr. Brocklesby repeated from Juvenal,

“*Orandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano,*” and so on to the end of the tenth satire; but in running it quickly over he happened in the line “*Qui spatium vitæ extremum inter munera ponat,*” to pronounce *supremum* for *extremum*; at which Johnson’s critical ear instantly took offence, and discoursing vehemently on the unmetrical effect of such a lapse, he shewed himself as full as ever of the spirit of the grammarian.

Having no near relations, it had been for some time Johnson’s intention to make a liberal provision for his faithful servant, Mr. Francis Barber, whom he had all along treated truly as an humble friend. Having asked Dr. Brocklesby what would be a proper annuity to bequeath to a favourite servant, and being answered that it must depend on the circumstances of the master; and that in the case of a nobleman fifty pounds a year was considered as an adequate reward for many years faithful service. “Then, (said Johnson) shall I be *nobilissimus*, for I mean to leave Frank seventy pounds a year, and I desire you to tell him so.” It is strange, however, to think, that Johnson was not free from that general weakness of being averse to execute a will, so that he delayed it from time to time; and had it not been for Sir John Hawkins’s repeatedly urging it, it is probable that his kind resolution would not have been fulfilled.

Amidst the melancholy clouds which hung
over

over the dying Johnson, his characteristical manner shewed itself on different occasions.

A man whom he had never seen before was employed one night to sit up with him. Being asked next morning how he liked his attendant, his answer was, "Not at all, Sir. The fellow's an idiot; he is as awkward as a turn-spit when first put into the wheel, and as sleepy as a dormouse."

Mr. Windham having placed a pillow conveniently to support him, he thanked him for his kindness, and said, "That will do—all that a pillow can do."

As he opened a note which his servant brought to him, he said, "An odd thought strikes me—We shall receive no letters in the grave."

He requested three things of Sir Joshua Reynolds:—To forgive him thirty pounds* which he had borrowed of him—to read the bible—and never to use his pencil on a Sunday. Sir Joshua readily acquiesced.

Johnson, with that native fortitude which, amidst all his bodily distress and mental sufferings, never forsook him, asked Dr. Brocklesby, as a man in whom he had confidence, to tell him plainly whether he could recover. "Give me (said he) a direct answer." The Doctor having first asked him if he could bear the whole truth, which way soever it might lead, and being answered that he could, declared that in his opinion he could not recover without a miracle. "Then (said Johnson) I will take no more physic, not even my opiates; for I have prayed that I may render up my soul to God unclouded."

* As the Doctor was by no means embarrassed in his circumstances, this request appears strange.

In this resolution he persevered, and at the same time used only the weakest kinds of sustenance.

After being in much agitation, Johnson became quite composed, and continued so till his death.

Dr. Brocklesby, who will not be suspected of fanaticism, obliged Mr. B. with the following accounts :

“ For some time before his death all his fears were calmed and absorbed by the prevalence of his faith, and his trust in the merits and *propitiation* of Jesus Christ.

“ He talked often to me about the necessity of faith in the *sacrifice* of Jesus, as necessary beyond all good works whatever for the salvation of mankind.

“ He pressed me to study Dr. Clarke, and to read his sermons. I asked him why he pressed Dr. Clark, an Arian. ‘ Because (said he) he is fullest on the *propitiatory sacrifice*.’ ”

Johnson having thus in his mind the true Christian scheme, at once rational and consolatory, uniting justice and mercy in the Divinity, with the improvement of human nature, while the Holy Sacrament was celebrating in his apartment, fervently uttered this prayer :

“ Almighty and most merciful Father, I am now, as to human eyes it seems about to commemorate, for the last time, the death of thy Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer. Grant, O Lord, that my whole hope and confidence may be in his merits, and thy mercy ; enforce and accept my imperfect repentance ; make this commemoration available to the confirmation of my faith, the establishment of my hope, and the enlargement of my charity ; and make the death of thy Son Jesus Christ effectual to my redemption. Have mercy upon me, and pardon the multitude

titude of my offences, Bless my friends; have mercy upon all men. Support me, by the Holy Spirit, in the days of weakness, and at the hour of death; and receive me, at my death, to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen."

"The Doctor, from the time that he was certain his death was near, appeared to be perfectly resigned, was seldom or never fretful or out of temper, and often said to his faithful servant, 'Attend, Francis, to the salvation of your soul, which is the object of greatest importance:'" he also explained to him passages in the scripture, and seemed to have pleasure in talking upon religious subjects.

"On Monday the 13th of December, the day on which he died, a Miss Morris, daughter to a particular friend of his, called, and said to Francis, that she begged to be permitted to see the Doctor, that she might earnestly request him to give her his blessing. Francis went into the room followed by the young lady, and delivered the message. The Doctor turned himself in the bed, and said, 'God bless you, my dear!' These were the last words he spoke.—His difficulty of breathing increased till about seven o'clock in the evening, when Mr. Barber and Mrs. Desmoulins, who were sitting in the room, observing that the noise he made in breathing had ceased, went to the bed, and found he was dead."

About two days after his death, the following very agreeable account was communicated to Mr. Malone, in a letter by the Honourable John Byng.

"DEAR SIR,

"SINCE I saw you, I have had a long conversation

versation with Cawston*, who sat up with Dr. Johnson from nine o'clock on Sunday evening till ten o'clock on Monday morning. And from what I can gather from him, it should seem, that Dr. Johnson was perfectly composed, steady in hope, and resigned to death. At the interval of each hour, they assisted him to sit up in his bed, and move his legs, which were in much pain; when he regularly addressed himself to fervent prayer; and though sometimes his voice failed him, his senses never did during that time. The only sustenance he received was cider and water. He said his mind was prepared, and the time to his dissolution seemed long. At six in the morning he enquired the hour, and on being informed, said that all went on regularly, and he felt he had but a few hours to live.

"At ten o'clock in the morning he parted from Cawston, saying, You should not detain Mr. Windham's servant—I thank you;—bear my remembrance to your master. Cawston says, that no man could appear more collected, more devout, or less terrified at the thoughts of the approaching minute.

"This account, which is so much more agreeable than, and somewhat different from yours, has given us the satisfaction of thinking that that great man died as he lived, full of resignation, strengthened in faith, and joyful in hope."

A few days before his death he had asked Sir John Hawkins, as one of his executors, where he should be buried; and on being answered "Doubtless in Westminster Abbey," seemed to feel a satisfaction very natural to a poet, and indeed very natural to every man of any imagination, who has no family sepulchre in which he can be

* A servant to the Right Hon. W. Windham.

laid with his fathers. Accordingly, upon Monday, December 20, his remains were deposited in that noble and renowned edifice; and over his grave was placed a large blue flag-stone, with this inscription:

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

Obiit XIII die Decembris,

Anno Domini

M. DCC. LXXXIV.

Ætatis suæ LXXV."

His funeral was attended by a respectable number of his friends, particularly by many of the members of the Literary Club, who were then in town; and was also honoured by the presence of several of the Reverend Chapter of Westminster. His school-fellow, Dr. Taylor, performed the mournful office of reading the service.

As Johnson had abundant homage paid to him during his life, so no writer in this nation ever had such an accumulation of literary honours, after his death. A sermon upon that event was preached in St. Mary's church, Oxford, before the University, by the Reverend Mr. Agutter, of Magdalen College.

CHARACTER.—BY MR. BOSWELL.

"His figure was large and well formed, and his countenance of the cast of an ancient statue; yet his appearance was rendered strange and somewhat uncouth, by convulsive cramps, by the scars of that distemper which it was once imagined the royal touch could cure, and by a slovenly mode of dress. He had the use only of one eye; yet so much does mind govern and even supply the deficiency of organs, that his visual perceptions, as far as they extended, were uncommonly quick and accurate. So morbid was his temperament,

rament, that he never knew the natural joy of a free and vigorous use of his limbs; when he walked, it was like the struggling gait of one in fetters; when he rode, he had no command or direction of his horse, but was carried as if in a balloon. That with his constitution and habits of life he should have lived seventy-five years, is a proof that an inherent *vivida vis* is a powerful preservative of the human frame.

“He was prone to superstition, but not to credulity. Though his imagination might incline him to a belief of the marvellous and the mysterious, his vigorous reason examined the evidence with jealousy. He was a sincere and zealous christian, of high Church-of-England and monarchical principles, which he would not tamely suffer to be questioned; and had perhaps, at an early period, narrowed his mind somewhat too much, both as to religion and politics. His being impressed with the danger of extremelatitude in either, though he was of a very independent spirit, occasioned his appearing somewhat unfavourable to the prevalence of that noble freedom of sentiment which is the best possession of man. Nor can it be denied, that he had many prejudices; which, however, frequently suggested many of his pointed sayings, that rather shew a playfulness of fancy than any settled malignity. He was steady and inflexible in maintaining the obligations of religion and morality, both from a regard for the order of society, and from a veneration for the great source of all order; correct, nay stern in his taste; hard to please, and easily offended; impetuous and irritable in his temper, but of a most humane and benevolent heart, which shewed itself not only in a most liberal charity,

charity, as far as his circumstances would allow, but in many instances of active benevolence.

He loved praise when it was brought to him; but was too proud to seek for it. He was somewhat susceptible of flattery. As he was general and unconfined in his studies, he cannot be considered as master of any one particular science; but he had accumulated a vast and various collection of learning and knowledge, which was so arranged in his mind, as to be ever in readiness to be brought forth. But his superiority over other learned men, consisted chiefly in what may be called the art of thinking, the art of using his mind; a certain continual power of seizing the useful substance of all that he knew, and exhibiting it in a clear and forcible manner; so that knowledge which we often see to be no better than lumber in men of dull understanding, was in him true, evident, and actual wisdom.

His moral precepts are practical; for they are drawn from an intimate acquaintance with human nature. His mind was so full of imagery, that he might have been perpetually a poet; yet it is remarkable, that however rich his prose is in that respect, the poetical pieces which he wrote were in general not so, but rather strong sentiment and acute observation, conveyed in good verse, particularly in heroick couplets. Though usually grave and even awful in his deportment, he possessed uncommon and peculiar powers of wit and humour: he frequently indulged himself in colloquial pleasantry; and the heartiest merriment was often enjoyed in his company; with this great advantage, that as it was entirely free from any poisonous tincture of vice or impiety, it was salutary to those who shared in it. He had accustomed himself to such accuracy in his common

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conversation, that he at all times delivered himself with an elegant choice of expression, and a slow deliberate utterance. He united a most logical head with a most fertile imagination, which gave him an extraordinary advantage in arguing; for he could reason close or wide, as he saw best for the moment. Exulting in his intellectual strength and dexterity, he could, when he pleased, be the greatest sophist that ever contended in the lists of declamation; and from a spirit of contradiction, and a delight in shewing his powers, he would often maintain the wrong side with equal warmth and ingenuity: so that, when there was an audience, his real opinions could seldom be gathered from his talk; though when he was in company with a single friend, he would discuss a subject with genuine fairness. But he was too conscientious to make error permanent and pernicious, by deliberately writing it; and in all his numerous works he earnestly inculcated what appeared to him to be the truth. His piety was constant, and was the ruling principle of all his conduct.

In answer to some insinuations of Sir John Hawkins, that the mind of Johnson was oppressed with a sense of *guilt*, Mr. Boswell is candid enough to own, "That his conduct after he came to London, and had associated with Savage and others, was not so strictly virtuous, in one respect as when he was a younger man. It was well known, that his amorous inclinations were uncommonly strong and impetuous. He owned to many of his friends, that he used to take women of the town to taverns and hear them relate their history. In short, it must not be concealed, that like many other good and pious men, amongst whom we may place the apostle Paul, upon his own authority, Johnson was not free from propensities which
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were ever "warring against the law of his mind,"—and that in his combats with them, he was sometimes, though rarely, overcome.

SUBSTANCE OF THE ROUND ROBIN,
[PRESENTED TO DR. JOHNSON.]

We the circumscribers, having read with great pleasure, an intended epitaph for the Monument of Dr. Goldsmith, which considered abstractedly appears to be, for elegant composition and masterly stile, in every respect worthy of the pen of its learned Author, are yet of opinion, that the Character of the Deceased as a Writer, particularly as a Poet, is perhaps, not delineated with all the exactness which Dr. Johnson is capable of giving it. We therefore, with deference to his superior judgment, humbly request that he would at least take the trouble of revising it, and of making such additions and alterations as he shall think proper, upon a further perusal: But if we might venture to express our wishes, they would lead us to request, that he would write the Epitaph in English, rather than in Latin: as we think that the memory of so eminent an English writer ought to be perpetuated in the language, to which his works are likely to be so lasting an ornament, which we also know to have been the opinion of the late Doctor himself.

Thos. Franklin.
Ant. Channier.
G. Colman.
Wm. Vackell.
J. Reynolds.
W. Forbes.

T. Barnard.
R. B. Sheridan.
P. Metcalf.
E. Gibbon.
Jos. Warton.
Edm. Burke.

We cannot take leave of these interesting Memoirs, without saying that we conceive the very ingenious, accurate, minute, and learned Biographer, to be strongly entitled to public admiration. He has detailed the most trifling circumstances in which Dr. Johnson was concerned, in so happy a manner, that we are as eager to pursue the passing page as if wading in the history of the most important events. He does not hide the defects of his formidable friend, but gives them in so true a colour, that, when they occur, it seems as if nature, and not the man, had erred. He rescues his memory, in a complete and satisfactory manner, from the ill-natured and ignorant attacks of former Biographers and Anecdote mongers, who sometimes mistook the Doctor's meaning, and who, at others, knowingly and even cruelly perverted it.

On the whole, we have nothing to regret, but that the preceding Abridgment gives too faint an idea of the astonishing merit of the original.

